

Autosport

Haymarket publication

19th January 1978 30p

INTERNATIONAL
COMPETITION
CALENDAR
1978



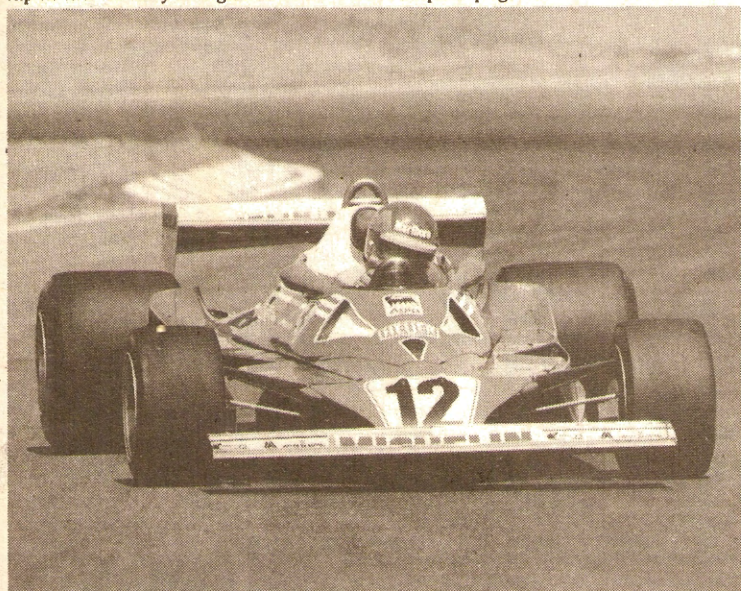
First blood to Mario

Full report from Argentina □ Group 1 racing review
NZ wins for Rosberg and Riley □ Castrol - Autosport/'78

this week

- 2 Pit & Paddock
- 6 Racecard
- 8 Correspondence
- 10 Argentine GP: Superwop blows 'em away
- 18 Special Stage
- 22 Castrol/AUTOSPORT '78: Are you ready?
- 24 Seasonal Survey Group 1: Better all the time
- 32 Road Test: Chrysler Sunbeam 1.6S
- 36 Janner Rally: Wittmann in chains
- 38 Sports Extra
- 42 Sportscard
- 44 Weekend Sport
- Insert International Competition Calendar 1978

Equipped with Michelin tyres, Gilles Villeneuve's Ferrari was credited with fastest lap in last Sunday's Argentine Grand Prix. Report: page 10.



Editor: Quentin Spurring. Assistant Editor: Robin Bradford. Sports Editor: Nigel Roebuck. Technical Editor: John Bolster. Assistant Editor (Rallies): Ann Bradshaw. International Rallies Editor: Henry Liddon. Club Editor: Marcus Pye. Chief Photographer: Jeff Bloxham. Editorial Assistant: Linda McRae.

American Editor: Gordon Kirby. European Editor: Jeff Hutchinson. Midlands Representative: Derek Hill. Correspondents: Scotland, Bill Henderson; Northern Ireland, Esler Crawford; Eire, Brian Foley; Canada, Chris Waddell; New Zealand, Peter Greenslade; Australia, Bob Jennings.

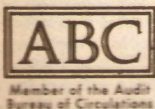
Advertisement Manager: Mike Trew. Group Advertisement Director: Derek Redfern.

Publishing Director: Simon Taylor.

Published every Thursday by: Haymarket Publishing Ltd, 76 Dean St, London W1A 1BU. Telephone: Editorial, 01-734 4242; Advertising, 01-439 6016. Telex: 23918 Haymarket LDN. Subscriptions and back numbers: Craven House, 34 Foubert's Place, London, W1.

Annual subscriptions: Home, £22.50; Overseas, surface mail, £22.50; Airmail, Europe, £30.00; Airmail, USA and Canada, £40. Other airmail rates on application.

Printed in England by: David Brockdorff Ltd, Forest Road, London, E17. Colour sections printed by: B. R. Hubbard Ltd, Callywhite Lane, Dronfield, Sheffield. Registered at the PO as a newspaper.



Reprinting in whole or part of any matter appearing in AUTOSPORT is forbidden, except by permission of the publishers © AUTOSPORT 1977.

Watch the apple cart

As our regular readers will know, AUTOSPORT generally comes out against monopolies, although we will readily admit that there are circumstances under which a monopoly can be an advantage. It is thanks largely to the near-monopoly of Grand Prix racing enjoyed by the Formula 1 Constructors Association, for example, that we have benefited from such competitive racing at the top end of the motor sport ladder. The Formula 1 tyre monopoly, which has been exercised so efficiently by Goodyear since the withdrawals of Dunlop and Firestone, has also contributed hugely to this unprecedented competitiveness, of course. But last weekend's Argentine Grand Prix meeting at Buenos Aires signalled the end of that monopoly. And there are already sure signs that the arrival of Michelin will not merely add another element of competition.

Goodyear are to be admired for the manner in which their monopoly has been handled. When Firestone pulled out, gone was the constant development of new compounds and constructions, the hectic attempts to achieve the minutest of advantages over the opposition. But in place of the strife, Goodyear embarked on a more level-headed, deliberate course of tyre research and development, the value of which to road tyre design was more fully understood. The technical know-how and prestige gained by Goodyear from their Formula 1 programme have been immense, and of incalculable value.

Michelin have now entered Grand Prix racing to gain a share in these benefits, and to challenge Goodyear as part of the great French motor racing renaissance. The present French mood—typified by Elf and Renault—calls for things to be done properly, and the Michelin men are fully in line with this thinking. On Michelin's Grand Prix debut at Buenos Aires, Carlos Reutemann's Ferrari started from the front row, and team-mate Gilles Villeneuve was credited with fastest lap. On race day, the Michelin engineers made a wrong decision about compounds, but nevertheless they made their mark with a truly exceptional debut.

The immediate competitiveness of Michelin produced an instant reaction, not only from Goodyear but also from within the previously united ranks of the F1CA. There were strong, if unconfirmed, rumours in Argentina that four of the F1CA member teams (dare we speculate Brabham, McLaren, Lotus and Tyrrell?) were pressing Goodyear to supply them exclusively with the 'development' rubber. If Goodyear decide that this step is necessary to resist the Michelin challenge, there are going to be some very angry F1CA members who are not so treated.

Both Goodyear (who scored their 80th successive Grand Prix victory last Sunday) and Michelin are in Formula 1 to win races. It is difficult to envisage an outside means of controlling the effects of a possible all-out tyre war, of which a split in the F1CA might be just one. Is the F1CA strong enough to control the repercussions of the arrival of Michelin?

cover picture

Patrick Depailler's new Elf-Tyrrell 008 was one of the sensations of Buenos Aires last Sunday, coming from nowhere to claim a strong third place in the Argentine GP on its race debut. Photo: Jeff Hutchinson.

next week

Ford versus Fiat: our annual review of International rallying—Profile of Brabham Formula 1 designer Gordon Murray—The first NASCAR race of 1978 on the Riverside road circuit—Interim report of the Monte Carlo Rally—Brazilian GP preview—Special Supplement: The 30-year history of Silverstone*

*These items were correct at the time of going to press.

Kyalami doubts: main sponsor quits

As we went to press, there were very serious doubts that this year's South African Grand Prix, scheduled for Kyalami on March 4, would be run.

For the last couple of years, the race has been sponsored by *The Citizen*, a Johannesburg daily newspaper, and it was expected that the backing would continue this year. A spokesman for the paper said that they had offered 200,000 Rand towards the running of the race, but had set January 13 as the deadline for the organisers to give them guarantees for the additional 500,000 Rand considered necessary to make the race a viable proposition. This the organisers (the South African Motor Racing Club) had been unable to do, and *The Citizen* was now withdrawing its offer. Even if the additional finance were found before the race, there was no question of the paper's becoming involved again.

A spokesman for SAMRAC said that the club had been looking for additional sponsorship for some time, and would continue to do so. SAMRAC was doing its very best to save the event, and a final decision would be made at the end of this week.

With the Japanese Grand Prix cancelled, the Canadian race in jeopardy (as is the Swedish, if a continental report is to be believed), this news about Kyalami is most unwelcome. If the race is cancelled, the lengthy test sessions which precede it would also be lost, which could seriously hamper the development of many of the brand-new Formula 1 cars which have yet to race.

Time is short for the organisers. Bernie Ecclestone says that the FICA need to know very shortly if the race is on or not. At this point, it seems rather unlikely.

Silverstone plans variety in 1978

As we mentioned briefly last week, Silverstone has a great deal to offer in 1978. The *Daily Express* International Trophy, to be run on March 19, will be the world's only non-championship F1 race this year, and will be supported by rounds of the Vandervell F3 Championship (20 laps), the RAC British Saloon Car Championship (20 laps) and the Esso Formula Ford Championship (12 laps).

By booking in advance, you can save yourselves some money. The individually reserved covered grandstand seats cost £10 for an adult (if you book in advance) and £7 for a child, and the advance prices for paddock tickets are £7.50 (adult) and £4.50 (child). These prices include admission to the circuit, and all parking is free. By booking in advance spectators can save £1 on adult prices on the day. Advance price tickets are available from Silverstone Circuits Booking Office, Silverstone, Near Towcester, Northants NN12 8TN.

The programme for the Tourist Trophy meeting, on September 17, has the RAC Tourist Trophy (107 laps) for Group 2 cars as its feature race, and will

be backed up by Silverstone's round of the Trans-Europe Trophy (20 laps) for Group 1 cars, and rounds of the VW Castrol Cup European Formula Super Vee Championship (20 laps) and the newly-constituted FIA European Historic Car Championship (10 laps).

GP stands all sold

Following the initial sell-out of all grandstand seats for the John Player British Grand Prix on July 16, Brands Hatch tell us that they have organised additional seating capacity. As a result, there will be almost 16,000 seats in 15 stands. All the extra seats have already been sold to people on the waiting list, and there now remain only the 1,440 seats on the Brabham Straight terrace which are to be sold on race day on a 'first come, first served' basis.

No F1 rubber for Aurora series

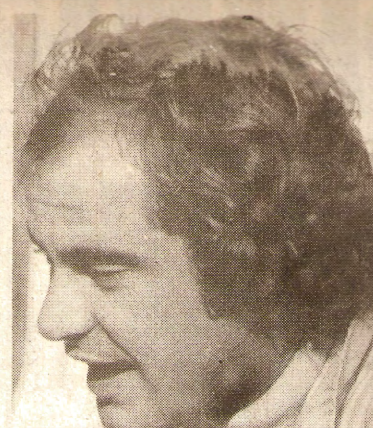
The regulations for the new Aurora AFX Formula 1 Championship have recently been issued. Eligible for the championship will be cars complying with the FIA International Regulations for Formula 1 and Formula 2, but running on National tyre regs.

Only Goodyear tyres may be used, and choice is minimal. The F1 runners may run either G50 or G54 dry tyres, and G45s for the wet. Those in the F2 category may choose between G50 and G44 Goodyears for the dry, and will also run G45s in the rain.

Cars built within the previous three years are eligible and must comply to vehicle regulations of the year in which

they were built. Cars built prior to this date must comply at least to the vehicle regs backdated three years from the present time; the constructors of these cars must examine them for raceworthiness and issue a Certificate before they are permitted to race.

Points will awarded on the 20-15-12 scale, and prize money ranges from £2000 for a win down to £200 for 10th place, and there are minimum guarantees for F2 runners. Drivers must hold class A or B RAC or FIA International licences, and drivers must put in a practice lap of not more than 110% of the average of the three fastest practice times.



Nilsson—still unfit.

Gunnar to miss Rio

Gunnar Nilsson is still not fully fit after his recent operation, and will not be driving the Arrows in its maiden race, the Brazilian Grand Prix at Riotur on Sunday week. The Swede is recovering well, but the heat of Rio is hardly to be recommended for a man recently in hospital. We wish Gunnar well and hope that he will be fit and well soon.

As we went to press, progress on the first of the F1 cars was still on schedule, and, providing there are no last-minute problems, Riccardo Patrese will run it round Silverstone for a few laps tomorrow (Friday). In Nilsson's absence, the car will be raced by the young Italian at Riotur.

● There are strong rumours that Gunnar Nilsson is to have his first NAS-CAR race shortly, at the Daytona 500 on February 19. It is said he will drive a Dodge for Jim Stacy, as team-mate to Neil Bonnett, but we doubt that he will be fit enough by then to compete in a 500-miler. Gunnar has his first taste of oval racing in the IROC last year, and was captivated by it, but his recent operation may well prevent him from running at Daytona.

Unser tests USAC Lola

Al Unser tested the new Haas/Hall USAC Lola-Cosworth DFX at Phoenix last Friday. It was the first time he had driven the car, and he afterwards said he was well pleased with it. This was not surprising, the car getting round within a second of the Phoenix track record—and on a very cold day.

The Haas/Hall outfit will, incidentally, be Cosworth's 'development' team in USAC this year. The McLaren and Penske teams will use turbocharged Cosworths built by Nicholson-McLaren Engines rather than Cosworth themselves.

F2 Henton

Having had a disappointing Formula 1 season last year where he found that low-budget teams and FICA politics don't mix terribly successfully, Brian Henton is looking seriously at returning to Formula 2 in 1978. A March-Hart combination looks the best at this stage for the Derby garage owner, although nothing has been decided at present.

Elio tests F1 Ferrari

With their new Michelin tyres, it is quite evident from Buenos Aires practice that Ferrari are having no trouble whatever in persuading their cars to go quickly. Team leader Carlos Reutemann unfortunately selected too hard a compound for the race, and so was unable to offer any challenge to Mario Andretti, who started alongside him on the front row.

While the team is away racing its 312T2s in south America, however, work continues apace back home. In addition to putting in a good deal of testing with his new Chevron-Ferrari F2 car, young Elio de Angelis is apparently due to have a run shortly in the latest 312T3 Formula 1 car. This time last year, the promising young Italian was about to embark on his first season of Formula 3.

Changes at F1CA

A recent press release issued by the Formula 1 Constructors Association contains the not altogether startling news that the Association will be represented, as in the past, by Bernie Ecclestone, who has been appointed President of Administration and Chief Executive. The General Purposes Committee has been dissolved.

Enzo Ferrari, formerly Honorary President, has been appointed President of Sport. Presumably, there is a difference. Bearing in mind the Commendatore's recent remarks about the F1CA, we can't see him getting overly excited about his new appointment. Both his and Bernie's appointments are for two years.

Max Mosley has been appointed Legal Adviser to the Association, and the duties previously undertaken by Peter Macintosh (the F1CA's Secretary, who resigned at the end of last year) have been absorbed within the Association's administration.

Spice, Craft to team up

Gordon Spice and Chris Craft, who finished first and second respectively in the 3-litre class of last year's Tricentrol British Saloon Car Championship, will be team-mates in this year's national G1 series. They will run two Ford Capris, with considerable backing from the works, the cars to be prepared up in Yorkshire by Pete Clark's company, which has looked after Spice's cars in the past.

A sponsor for the team has yet to be announced, but Spice has also been busy planning a possible attack on the Trans-Europe G1 series, which includes rounds at the prestigious Spa 24 Hours and Tourist Trophy meetings, in both of which events he has featured well in the past.

A man of few words

Danny Ongais is not the sort of man who believes in using two words where one will do, his comments on his new Ensign seat ranging from "OK, all right" to "I don't know". It's not that he means to be obtuse. He's just grown up that way. Everybody who saw his performance out on the track at Buenos Aires agrees that he doesn't lack in the driving department, even if his off-track behaviour is somewhat introvert.

"It's funny you should say that. He doesn't say much more to me, either," said Morris Nunn when I asked him if he could shed some light on Danny's weekend.

"Do you know, when he decided to run these two races he flew over from Los Angeles for a seat fitting. He drove up to the factory, got in the car and just sat there. I said, 'How is the seat?' and he said, 'Fine'. I said, 'How are the pedals?' and he pressed them and said, 'OK'. Then he got out of the car without changing a thing and drove back to the airport and got the next plane back to the States!" said Nunn.

When he wasn't running in the car, Ongais seemed to spend most of his time speaking—or being spoken to by Don Nichols. Could it be that Don is trying to strike up a deal between himself, Ongais and Danny's sponsor, Ted Field?

Niki's jet

Niki Lauda recently took delivery of his new Lear 36A jet which he flew down to Buenos Aires from Salzburg via Malaga, Dakar and Salvador. It took 15 flying hours, for all of which he flew the plane unofficially, for at the moment he does not have his Lear jet rating. "I have passed all the theory, now I just have the practical and that's easy. I do it when I get back to Europe. I just got my commercial licence which means I can fly a Jumbo if I want to, all I have to do is get my rating for a Jumbo," said Niki.

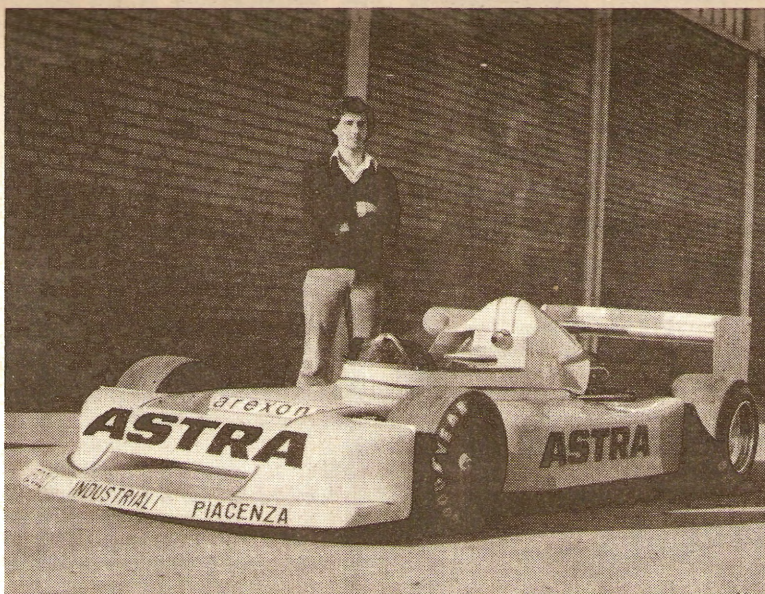
When he gives up racing and starts flying for a living, it wouldn't be surprising to see Bernie Ecclestone and the FICA freighting his first contract. Then he won't complain about too many Grands Prix...

Andretti's home brew

The week before Mario Andretti won the Argentine Grand Prix he was up on his 600-acre farm in Michigan doing some snowmobiling with his two boys.

"It's really great. We go for miles through the trails, sometimes right on through the night. Last weekend we stopped at a little shack and were eating pizzas at three o'clock in the morning. It sure was hard to pack my bags and come down here, I can tell you," said Mario. That was before he went out and won the race.

His stable of snowmobiles includes a full-race version. "It's quick. Gets up to about 118mph and runs on special fuel. I mix my own up on the farm to a special brew that Parnelli Jones taught me". It seems that Sammy Sessions, the sprint car racer who was recently killed in a snowmobile race, might well have died of a heart attack before the crash. "People who were there said he just slumped over the bars and went straight on over the banking," said Mario.



Piero Necchi's Astra-backed March 782 will contest the European F2 championship.

Osella BMW engines for Necchi's F2 March

Elio de Angelis and Beppe Gabbiani will be spearheading the Italian Ferrari attack in Formula 2 this coming year with the Dino-powered Chevron B42s, and now we hear that yet another promising Italian Formula 3 driver, former kartist Piero Necchi, is also moving on up into Formula 2 in 1978.

Necchi who, like de Angelis, used both Chevron and Ralt to good effect last season (he won several races), has chosen a March 782 chassis for Formula 2 and will be using Osella-prepared BMW M12/7-series engines. Backing

will once again come from Astra, a large Italian company who specialise in building earth-moving equipment.

Apart from servicing Necchi's Formula 2 engines, Enzo Osella's company will also be undertaking a comprehensive G5 and G6 programme. The G5 car will be the Italian 'works' BMW 320i driven by Eddie Cheever and Giorgio Francia while their new PA6 2-litre BMW-powered sports car will be handled on occasions by Francia, Lella Lombardi, reigning European Touring Car champion Dieter Quester and former F2 racer Duilio Truffo.

Arco for Gurney

Confirmed in the States last week was the news that Dan Gurney's Eagle team is to be sponsored this year by Arco Petroleum. The cars are to be known as ARCOgraphite Eagles, and will be painted black with yellow and orange trim.

Our American correspondent reports that drawings of the new car suggest a return to the sort of format used on the famous '1972-type' Eagles, rather than the radical car built for the 1977 season. Last season's Eagle, driven by Pancho Carter, proved uncompetitive, and Carter left the team before the end of the season to join the Cobre Tire Team, which Bobby Unser left to rejoin Gurney!

The new car will apparently be quite small, the first Eagle to run with a

Cosworth DFX engine. In the past, Gurney has always relied upon the legendary Offenhauser. The latest Eagle also has a transverse gearbox, similar to that of the Parnellis last season, and it is thought that transverse gearboxes could become all the rage in USAC this season.

Additional support for the team comes from Teddy Yip this year, of course, and Bobby Unser will contest the entire Citicorp USAC Championship trail for the team. For the first few races, until the new Eagle is ready, Unser will use a Lightning. At Indianapolis two new Eagles will be run, and driving the second one will probably be none other than Clay Regazzoni, who drove for Yip in last year's race in a McLaren M16D.

Rivet Supply Brands

The Rivet Supply Company, who are already to sponsor one of MCD's special saloon championships, announced last week their support for the opening round of the European Touring Car Championship at Brands Hatch. Former BRSCC Executive Director Nick Syrett—now the Chiswick company's motorsport consultant—announced a £7,000 prize fund at a pleasant and informal gathering in London.

To be run for 500Km (312.5 miles or 120 laps) over the Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit on Sunday, March 12, the event features big cash bonuses for Group 1 cars, which will be running to

British Saloon Car series regs. If, for instance, a G1 Capri finishes sixth overall, winning its class and category, the driver will take home £660. An entry in this race will give serious G1 contenders an extra chance to shake down their cars before the opening RAC round at Silverstone the following weekend.

In support of the ETC round, to be run in association with the *Daily Mail* and their special saloon sponsorship—13 events in all—Rivet Supply will be sending along the Yellow Bus, a vast 11-ton double decker which will be used as a hospitality suite.

Lunger to run an M26

By the start of the European Grand Prix season, Brett Lunger should have a new car at his disposal, this none other than a McLaren M26!

As ever, the car will be owned and run by BS Fabrications, and sponsored by the American tobacco company, Liggett & Myers International Corporation. Bob Sparshott and John Woodington, co-owners of BS Fabrications, have recently taken on David Pollard as Chief Designer. Pollard was formerly employed by Ken Tyrrell for three years before moving to ATS towards the end of last season. When the German company took over March's F1 interests, part of the package was the design talents of Robin Herd, so Pollard left to join BS.

For the first time, BS Fabrications plan to contest the entire World Championship this year.

New G8 March

March Sales Manager James Gresham informs us that March will be laying down a special three-off March 782 G8 car, this being their F2 car suitably updated to take a DFV engine for this year's Aurora AFX F1/F2 championship. The works will take an 'interest' in these special cars, and any team interested in buying one should contact Gresham at Bicester 3993.

Cooper's Heskeths

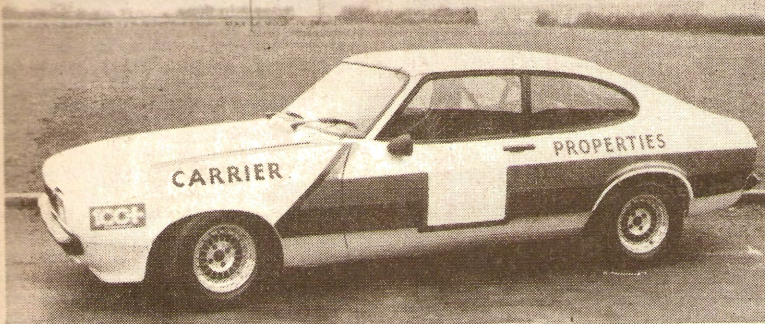
Wolverhampton sports car driver John Cooper has bought both the Hesketh 308C Formula 1 cars which Frank Williams ran in 1976, and plans to contest the new Aurora AFX Formula 1 Championship this year.

Cooper, who did well with a Lola in the 1977 Sodastream Sports 2000 Championship, competed in 22 races last year and finds he will not have the same amount of time available this year. "I decided initially to go back to rallying," he says, "but I changed my mind when I realised that my eyesight at night is not as good as I thought it should be. So I bought the cars from Derek Cook in Rotherham, and we are going to have a crack at this series."

Managing director of a group of companies in the Midlands, Cooper has already started shakedown testing with one of the cars, and intends to get in at least 1000 miles of practice before the opening round of the series at Oulton Park on Good Friday.

At his Pittingham home, the cars are being looked after by a team of three mechanics headed by Brian Stewart (formerly with Surtees), and the second car will either be used as a back-up or will be available for a second driver. Says Cooper, "I have worked out the costs, and if anyone reputable comes along with around £40,000 they can rent the car and our services for the season."

Cooper has been in motor sport for six years. His first foray was in rallying, but he quickly moved on to the circuits when he acquired a Ford GT40. In 1975 he finished fifth at Le Mans.



Lawrie Hickman's Carrier Properties G1 Capri.

Hickman's G1 comeback

Back on the racing circuits this summer, after an absence of four years, will be Lawrie Hickman, the saloon car driver who made his name in various Anglias and Escorts. Hickman will be contesting the RAC British Saloon Car Championship in an ex-Vince Woodman 3-litre Capri.

The car will be sponsored by Mr Alistair Ward of Wombourne, through one of his companies, Carrier Properties. Mr Ward, through another company (Senfield Properties), became involved in motor sport last year when he supported the Castrol 77 Rally, a round of the Castrol/AUTOSPORT championship. The Capri is being prepared by David Lampitt at Pershore, the engine

is in the care of Ralph Broad, and Hickman will be using Dunlop tyres on 100 Plus wheels.

Hickman has been testing several times already in his new car at Silverstone, and on his first outing he got down to competitive times within a dozen laps.

During a career which started in 1966, Hickman scored 14 international wins among a total of about 80 successes. Besides racing an Anglia for Sid Taylor, and also driving the car that John Fitzpatrick had from Fords, Hickman was latterly engaged in an Escort with a BRM engine, and he has also driven for Ralph Broad in a 1-litre Escort.

New Dutch F3 team

Holland has resurrected its famous Dutch Racing Team, a name well known to followers of European saloon car racing in the late sixties. In those days, the DRT banner proclaimed the arrival of such well-known Dutchmen as Toine Hezemans and Ed Swart. Later on, in the early seventies, the team switched to 2-litre sports cars and was sponsored by Radio Team Veronica, a Dutch offshore pirate radio ship. Now they are back, supporting three of their most promising drivers in Formula 3 this coming season.

The team will be based in England, however, and run by Roger Heavens, who has been running his own racing team from near Oxford.

Heavens, who learned the ropes of Formula 3 last season, running the Equipo Nacional Espagnol F3 team for Spaniards Luis Canomanuel and Juan

Villacieros, will again be in charge of Toyota-powered Ralt chassis as the Dutch team plan to make an assault on the whole European Formula 3 Championship.

Driving the two lead cars will be 23-year-old Huub Rothengatter and 22-year-old Jan Lammers, both of whom drove in the formula last season. In fact, this will be Rothengatter's third F3 season, his last two having been in a March. He has shown promise on occasions (winning lesser events in Europe).

As for Lammers, he's just finished a difficult season with the troublesome Hawke F3 car.

The third driver in the team, although expected to take in only about 10 races in the spare car, will be 23-year-old Arie Luyendijk, the only real talent to emerge from European Super Vee last year.

Briefly . . .

● Helping out with the running of the ATS team in Buenos Aires was ex-March F2 manager Sandro Angeliri. Looking fit and well and sporting a new beard, he hopes to stay with the ATS team for the rest of the season. Welcome back.

● Although it is suggested that motorbike star Giacomo Agostini has, once and for all, quit the two-wheeled world for motor racing, we await official confirmation that he'll be sponsored in a Formula 2 March-BMW 782 this year by Marlboro and Parmalat. At 38, perhaps Ago's leaving his four-wheel bid a bit late.

● Paying a welcome, if brief, visit to London last week was Mike Hailwood, who had flown over to appear in a *This is Your Life* programme about his friend. . . . Ah, well, that's got you thinking!

● Lest you get depressed at the thought of the price of a grandstand seat in England these days, let us cheer you up a little. In fact, you get remarkable value. At Monza and Zandvoort this year, a stand seat will cost you £25; at Hockenheim and Monte Carlo, you will pay around £40, and at Zolder, believe it or not, a seat in the stand will set you back £48! As far as paddock tickets are concerned, you will be out of luck nearly everywhere. You simply cannot buy a paddock ticket at European circuits—save at, you guessed it, Zolder. And that will cost you £19. . . . It is true that they all earn a great deal more than we do, but not *that* much more. No, England seems like a pretty good deal for race spectators.

● How do they do it? One Formula 1 team, which was represented in Argentina last weekend, told us that Renzo Zorzi had approached them for a drive, saying that he would bring along £250,000! But isn't that what it cost a certain Swede to rejoin John Player Team Lotus?

● Chevron Cars tell us that they have received firm orders for no fewer than 20 of their 1978 Formula 2 chassis, the Chevron B42.

● Expected to receive backing from F. & S. Properties in Formula 3 this year is Dutch Formula Ford star Michael Bleekemolen.

● Stories abound within British Formula 3 circles that the Unipart F3 team will be run this season by Dave Price Racing, based in Twickenham. The driving line-up is expected to be unchanged.

● Another man who will shortly make his NASCAR debut is Al Holbert, last year's IMSA Champion. He will drive a Chevrolet.

● At the Canadian Racing Drivers' Associations' annual banquet, held last week, Gilles Villeneuve and Ludwig Heimrath were jointly chosen as Driver of the Year. The CRDA's Media Award, for outstanding motor sport coverage, was won, we are glad to say, by AUTOSPORT's Gordon Kirby, whom we congratulate.

Emerson's 100th

Buenos Aires was—statistically, anyway—a milestone in the career of Emerson Fittipaldi, for it was his 100th Grand Prix. In recognition of this, Emerson has been presented with the 'Colibri' Trophy, this having nothing to do with cigarette lighters. A 'colibri' or 'hummingbird' is the symbol used by the Copersucar-Fittipaldi team, and the presentation was made by Copersucar. We look forward to the time when they present him with a trophy to mark the team's first Grand Prix win. Emerson's last victory was at Silverstone in July 1975. . . .

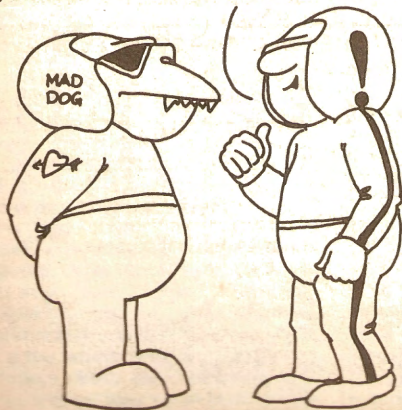
Fittipaldi's Colibri Trophy.



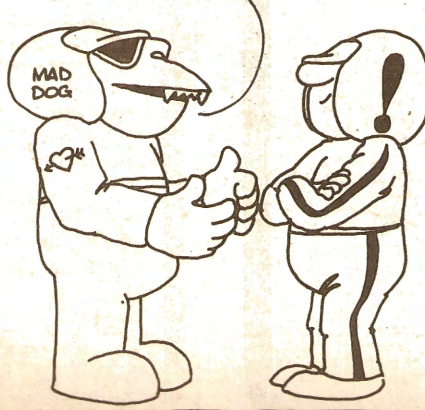
catchpole

by Barry Foley

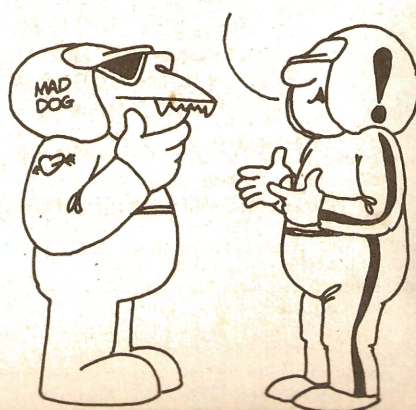
I SEE POOROLD JODY SCHECKTER HAS LOST HIS NICKNAME TO JACKIE OLIVER.

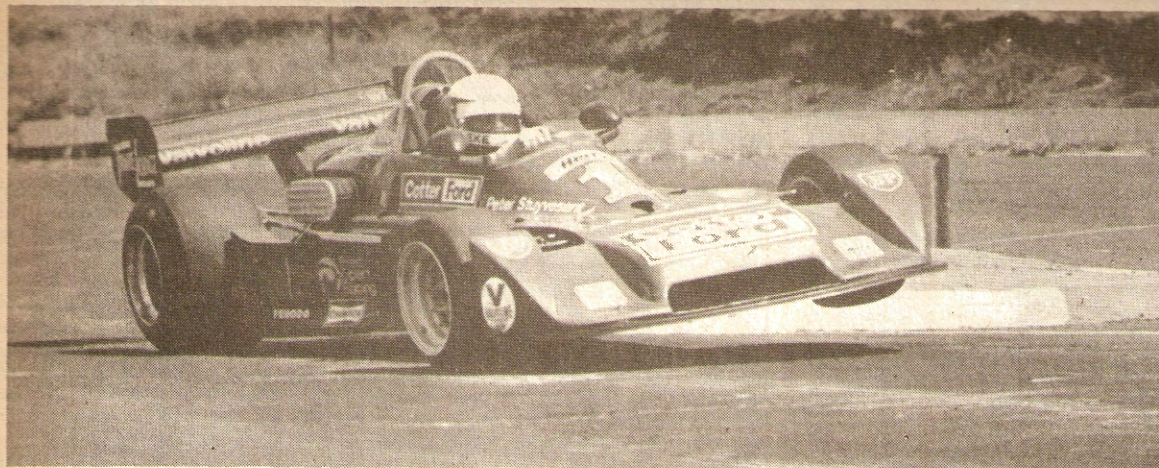


REALLY, WHY IS THAT?



WELL, ACCORDING TO MY DICTIONARY, 'FLETCHER' IS A MAN WHO MAKES ARROWS.





finish line a conclusive winner, with Rahal 3.8secs behind him. Perkins had been left in the lurch and he finished 15.5secs later and 10.8secs ahead of Oxtan, who was 8.6secs ahead of sixth man Smith.

**New Zealand Grand Prix
Pukekohe
Peter Stuyvesant Series, round 3
30 laps, 52.38 miles**

- 1, Keke Rosberg (Chevron B39), 32m. 50.7s. 97.09mph;
 - 2, Bobby Rahal (Chevron B39), 32m 54.5s;
 - 3, Larry Perkins (Ralt RT1), 33m 10.0s;
 - 4, David Oxtan (Chevron B39), 33m 20.8s;
 - 5, Ken Smith (March 76B), 33m 29.4s;
 - 6, Danny Sullivan (March 77B), 33m 30.0s; etc.
- Fastest lap:** Rosberg, 1m 4.5s, 97.45mph.

The news that McMillan had protested about the start of the first race was given over the public address system as the field lined up on the grid for the second one. It added to the tension of the occasion, for the contestants were substantially in the same places as they had been for the first start, Rosberg being outside McMillan on the front row.

This time, there was no funny business. Starter Powell had a perfect line-up as the pace car pulled off the track and, as he let them go, McMillan really booted the Ralt into a firm first place from Rosberg, with Rahal next followed by Perkins and Sullivan.

With McMillan leading, the field streamed into the back straight and towards the first chicane. Rosberg was second in, but it was Rahal who was second out. The chunky Finn had lost it, and that cost him seven or eight places. So when they completed the first lap, it was McMillan, Rahal, Perkins, Sullivan, Melville, Miedecke, Millen, Smith and Riley, with Oxtan among the most prominent of the rest.

At the end of three laps, McMillan was 2secs clear of Rahal, who was being hurried along by Perkins. Rahal kept back Perkins into lap 9, and then the Australian moved into second place. However, while Perkins had been trying to find a way around Rahal, Rosberg had been slicing his way back to a challenging position. He picked off slower runners lap after lap, and by the time Perkins had become second he was third, for the whole business had proved too much for Rahal's engine which simply faded away on the back straight. That left Opert with only Rosberg to carry the flag.

Keke immediately set about seeing off Perkins. For ten laps the Finn tried everything he knew to get into second place to have a go at McMillan. Time after time, Rosberg moved in on the Australian as they swept out of the pits straight into the fast left-hand sweeper. First the Finn tried to get his Chevron's nose inside the Ralt, that was hopeless. Then he tried to go around the outside, but that was no use, for Rosberg's B39 was understeering and Keke had no alternative but to back off.

McMillan's lead was tenuous, to say the least. Like Rosberg, he, too, was becoming desperate, for Perkins was filling his mirrors. Finally, on lap 19, instead of going right around the chicane before the pit straight, he crunched over its verge in the hope of

Rosberg bounces his Opert Chevron over the Pukekohe chicane on his way to a convincing victory.

Rosberg's Pukekohe double

Keke Rosberg consolidated his position as leader in the Peter Stuyvesant international series for Formula Pacific cars at Pukekohe on January 7, when he won both the 30-lap races which, somehow or other, constituted the New Zealand Grand Prix. Driving the Fred Opert-entered Chevron B39, Rosberg led the first race from end to end, and won the second one after a tremendous battle with Larry Perkins (Ralt). Fastest qualifier for the Pukekohe races was Dave McMillan with a best lap in 64.1s, but the new lap record went to Rosberg, with 64.5 for the 1.75-mile circuit.

A protest by McMillan (in which he claimed that Rosberg had jumped the start in the first rolling start) was dismissed, although it was apparent to all who saw it that Rosberg was a clear leader when the pace car pulled off the circuit and the starter unleashed the 20-car field. Rosberg was second fastest qualifier in 64.3, and shared the front row with McMillan and Perkins, who was third fastest with 64.6. The Australian was in the box seat to see what was going on at the start, and also stoutly maintained that Rosberg had broken early. For his part, Rosberg maintained that McMillan had purposely held back, and had thereby created a very hazardous situation.

Qualifying was held the previous day in ideal weather, there being two sessions. It was of rather more significance than it had been at the opening Stuyvesant meeting at Bay Park a few days earlier, as there were more than 20 drivers carded for the events, and this meant that the slower qualifiers would have to earn the right to start by participating in a 10-lap qualifying race on the day. At Bay Park, there had been the neat 20 starters, so there was no qualifying race.

Rosberg was the man everyone expected would take pole position, and in fact it looked very much that way until McMillan made his late run. This was made late in the second session and so Rosberg, who had been in and out of his pit most of the day for minor adjustments, had no time in which to improve. Perkins was obviously rather happier with the faster Pukekohe corners than the general stop-go nature of the Bay Park circuit, and he looked the man most likely to give Rosberg some hurry-up in the qualifying. As things turned out, however, he was a little off the pace, yet still third fastest and 0.4sec better than Bobby Rahal who, like Perkins, seemed more at home on the faster track with the second Opert Chevron.

Jamaican-born Richard Melville got his March 76B around in 65.1, and that was equalled by Australian Andrew Miedecke in yet another 76B. Winner

of one of the two Bay Park races, Steve Millen (Schollum Chevron) made 65.4, just 0.2sec better than Danny Sullivan with the factory-entered March 77B.

Although their times were nothing to get excited about, Brett Riley (March 76B), Englishman Ian Grob (March 77B) and Belgian Pierre Dieudonné (Ehrlich RP3) were assured of starts in the two races the following day.

The following morning the drivers still to qualify for starts were called for the 10-lapper, and this field comprised Eric Morgan (Chevron B29), Norm Lankshear (Chevron B34), Robbie Francevic (Modus), David Oxtan (Chevron B39), Hugh Owen (Ralt RT1), Ross Stone (Cuda JR3), Dave Saunders (March 76B), Peter Lerner (Brabham BT36), Graeme Crawford (Birrana 273), Reg Cook (March 742) and Steve Emson (Eastool). One recalls that Oxtan is a former Formula Ford national champion and three times New Zealand single-seater champion, and has also been the first New Zealander home in the NZGP, and one cannot help but wonder what grounds Stuyvesant series director Ron Frost and his advisers had for allowing him to be among the unseeded in this series.

With the drop of the flag, Emson found he had no gears and Stone in his McLaren-like Cuda shot into the lead and was never challenged thereafter. Oxtan ran second for a couple of laps before being taken by Francevic, who ran out second with Oxtan third, Lankshear fourth, Morgan fifth and Crawford sixth. It was a very dull argument.

Just what it proved is anyone's guess, but when the field lined up for the first race of the New Zealand Grand Prix there were 20 cars on the grid and Oxtan, with a qualifying time of 66.1, was ninth on the grid with Ken Smith (March 76B) tenth. Then came Stone (66.3), Riley (66.5), Francevic (66.6), Grob (67.4), Lankshear (68.4), Cook (68.4), Dieudonné (68.7), Morgan (68.9), Crawford (68.9) and Saunders (69.4).

With Macmillan in the white Ralt in pole position and Rosberg outside him, the 20 cars moved off behind the pace car. When they came round to complete the lap Rosberg was clearly well in front of McMillan. It appeared for an instant that there would be another pace lap, but starter Laurie Powell was satisfied. Rosberg, naturally enough, shot into an uncontested lead and teammate Rahal, who was directly behind him on the grid, slotted right in behind him. Melville moved in behind Rahal and Millen was next, followed by McMillan, then came Perkins and Sullivan.

Rosberg was well clear with Rahal in attendance after the first lap. Melville, evidently feeling that the situation

would get out of hand if he did not attempt to keep up with the Opert pair, ripped through the chicane on the rise just before the start-finish line, and promptly lost his March 76B in the biggest way. Fortunately he finished up well of the track with his nose pointing downhill on the infield, but he had to wait until the remainder of the field had gone by before he could resume.

In the meantime, McMillan, who was probably a bit upset about the mess-up at the start, bounced over the concrete verge of the chicane, broke a driveshaft and, within 100 yds, pulled to the outside of the track to join the spectators.

By now Rosberg and Rahal were secure in front, and Millen was in third place and steadily losing ground, after six laps, he was 4secs behind Rahal, and after 10 laps the margin was 13secs. Behind Millen were Perkins, Miedecke, Sullivan, Oxtan and Riley, followed by Smith, Stone and Francevic. Melville, who had managed to gather in Saunders, pitted at half-distance and did not re-appear.

Rosberg was now in complete control of the situation and Rahal was firmly in second place, ahead of Perkins, Sullivan, Oxtan, Miedecke, Riley and Smith. Before two-thirds of the race had been run, Rosberg and Rahal were lapping the tail-enders, and by that time Riley had managed to get up to fourth place behind Perkins. He remained there until five laps from the finish when Saunders, who was well out of the hunt, dumped his oil on the track at the chicane on the rise just in front of Riley. The young New Zealander was caught unawares and ended up hard against a barrier with a badly mangled front corner on his March.

Oxtan automatically took over fourth place behind Perkins, and Smith was next with Sullivan, Stone and Francevic following and the rest of the runners pretty much out of contention. Still going as he liked, Rosberg crossed the

PETER STUYVESANT NEW ZEALAND FORMULA PACIFIC CHAMPIONSHIP

	Net	Jan 02 Bay Park	Jan 02 Bay Park	Jan 07 Pukekohe	Jan 07 Pukekohe	Jan 15 Manfield	Jan 15 Manfield	Jan 22 Teretonga	Jan 22 Teretonga	Jan 29 Wigram	Jan 29 Wigram	Total points
1 Keke Rosberg	SF	4	9	9	9	—	9	—	—	—	—	40
2 Larry Perkins	AUS	6	—	4	6	—	6	—	—	—	—	22
3 Bobby Rahal	USA	—	2	6	—	3	6	—	—	—	—	20
4 Danny Sullivan	USA	—	4	—	4	—	4	—	—	—	—	16
5 Dave McMillan	NZ	3	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
6 Brett Riley	NZ	—	—	—	—	9	—	—	—	—	—	10
7 Steve Millen	NZ	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9
8 Ken Smith	NZ	—	1	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
9 Andrew Miedecke	AUS	2	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
10 David Oxtan	NZ	—	—	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Richard Melville	NZ	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
12 Ross Stone	NZ	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1

picking up some fractions of a second. That did it: a suspension rosejoint broke, and McMillan's race was over.

With McMillan out of the way, Rosberg kept on with his assault on Perkins. On lap 28 he repeated McMillan's trick at the chicane on the rise. The nose of his Chevron hard up against the rear wheels of the Ralt, he shifted his line and cut over the chicane's concrete verge to emerge with his nose inside Perkins. By the time the two had dashed down the pits straight, Rosberg was on the inside and in front, and he had established the lead he was not to relinquish as he went in to the left-hander. From that moment onwards, the race was his, and in the remaining three laps the Finn managed to increase his lead over the Australian to 1.7secs.

Sullivan, who had been dogged by Melville for most of the race, came home 6.4secs later, with an interval of 0.4sec to Melville. Next were Smith and Oxtan, some 20secs back but less than a second apart.

The lead dice was the highlight of the day and, if anyone was in any doubt about Keke Rosberg's New Zealand intentions beforehand, there were very few people who left Pukekohe that evening not convinced that the Flying Finn was all-out to complete a Peter Stuyvesant double. The bucking ride over the verge of the chicane had knocked the stuffing out of the Opert Chevron's suspension, but even so Rosberg had got it home ahead of the hard-charging Perkins, who is the only other driver in the series who looks as though he has the capacity to win a race at this stage.

PETER GREENSLADE

New Zealand Grand Prix

Pukekohe

Peter Stuyvesant Series, round 4
30 laps, 52.38 miles

- 1, Keijo Rosberg (Chevron B39), 32m 49.8s, 97.11mph;
- 2, Larry Perkins (Ralt RT1), 32m 51.5s;
- 3, Danny Sullivan (March 77B), 33m 7.9s;
- 4, Richard Melville (March 76B), 33m 27.9s;
- 5, Ken Smith (March 76B), 33m 27.9s;
- 6, David Oxtan (Chevron B39), 33m 28.8s; etc.

Fastest lap: Rosberg, 1m 4.6s, 97.30mph.

USA dates

Our American Editor notified us this week of the newly-announced schedules for the various classes of racing in the USA this year. Unfortunately, the dates were released too late for inclusion in the International Calendar in this week's issue. The dates, however, are as follows:

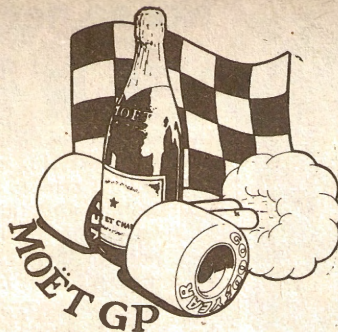
Citricorp USAC Championship Trail: Mar 5, Ontario; Mar 18, Phoenix; Apr 15, Texas; Apr 23, Trenton; May 13/14, May 20/21, Indianapolis qualifying; May 28, Indianapolis; Jun 11, Mosport; Jun 18, Milwaukee; Jun 25, Pocono; Jul 16, Michigan; Aug 6, Texas; Aug 20, Milwaukee; Sep 3, Ontario; Sep 16, Michigan; Sep 23, Trenton; Sep 30, Silverstone; Oct 7, Brands Hatch; Nov 11, Phoenix.

Winston NASCAR Grand National Drivers Championship: Jan 22, Riverside; Feb 19, Daytona; Feb 26, Richmond; Mar 5, Rockingham; Mar 19, Atlanta; Apr 2, Bristol; Apr 9, Darlington; Apr 16, North Wilkesboro; Apr 23, Martinsville; May 7, Talladega; May 13, Nashville; May 21, Dover Downs; May 28, Charlotte; Jun 11, Riverside; Jun 18, Michigan; Jul 4, Daytona; Jul 15, Nashville; Jul 30, Pocono; Aug 6, Talladega; Aug 20, Michigan; Aug 27, Bristol; Sep 4, Darlington; Sep 10, Richmond; Sep 17, Dover Downs; Sep 24, Martinsville; Oct 1, North Wilkesboro; Oct 8, Charlotte; Oct 22, Rockingham; Nov 5, Atlanta; Nov 19, Ontario.

Camel GT Challenge: Feb 4/5, Daytona; Mar 18, Sebring; Apr 2, Talladega; Apr 16, Atlanta; Apr 30, Laguna Seca; May 7, Hallett; May 29, Lime Rock; Jun 4, Mid-Ohio; Jun 18, Brainerd; Jul 4, Daytona; Jul 23, Mid-Ohio; Jul 30, Sears Point; Aug 6, Portland; Aug 27, Mid-Ohio; Sep 4, Atlanta; Nov 26, Daytona.

Canadian-American Formula Atlantic Championship: Apr 1, Long Beach; Apr 23, Westwood; Jun 11, Quebec City; Jul 4, Lime Rock; Jul 23, Elkhart Lake; Aug 6, Hamilton; Aug 13, Watkins Glen; Sep 3, Trois Rivières (non-championship).

Citricorp CanAm Challenge Cup: May 14, Atlanta; Jun 11, St. Jovite; Jun 25, Brainerd; Jul 9, Watkins Glen; Jul 23, Elkhart Lake; Aug 6, Mid-Ohio; Aug 20, Mosport; Sep 3, Trois Rivières; Oct 8, Laguna Seca; Oct 15, Riverside.

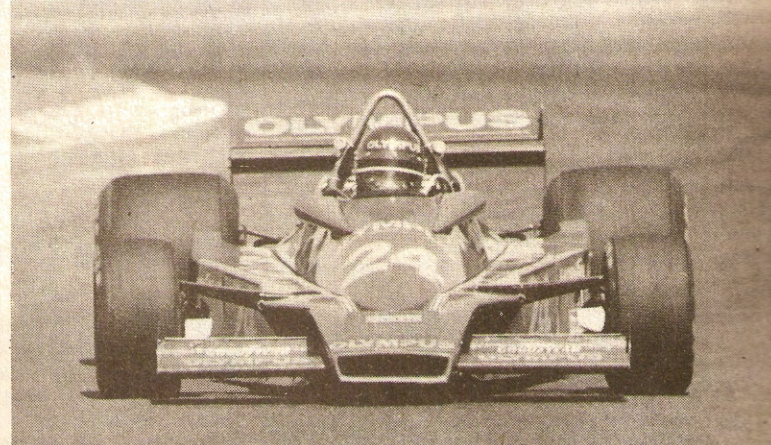
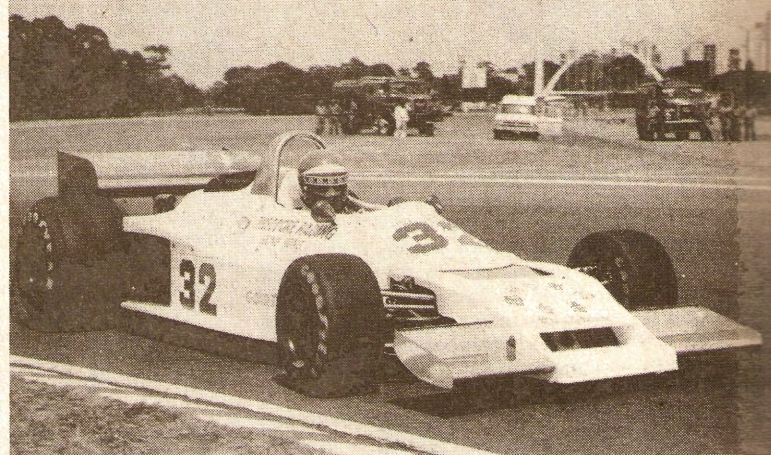


Most of our readers predicted that James Hunt would win the Argentine Grand Prix in the first of the 1978 AUTOSPORT-Moët et Chandon Grand Prix Competition series, but Mario Andretti it was, and our first winner of the season is Mr I. O. Hughes, from Prestatyn in North Wales. Mr Hughes, who predicted that Mario would win at an average

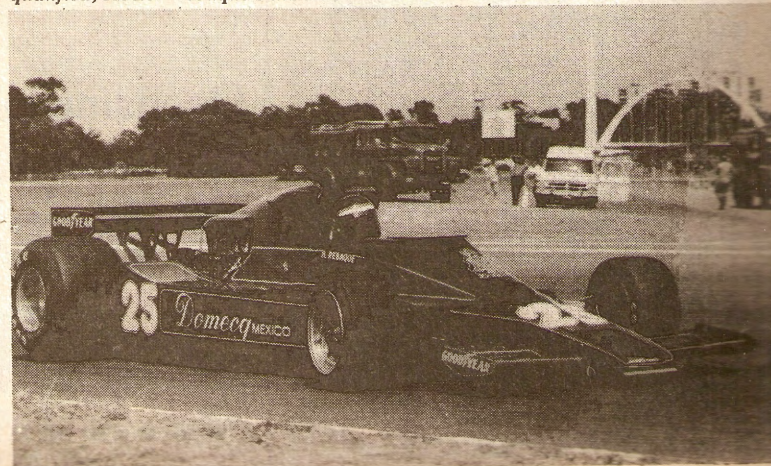
speed of 118.703mph, is lucky enough to win a magnum of the Golden Elixir, which is now on its way to Clwyd.

Next, Brazil. This is a difficult one, because there has never been a Formula 1 race at the brand new Rotor circuit on which the Brazilian Grand Prix will be held on January 29. The 3.125-mile track has a mixture of slow, medium and fast corners linked by one short and one long straight. World Champion Niki Lauda, who drove a Brabham BT45C round the new circuit last month, described it as 'Mickey-Mouse', we understand that, with something in hand, Niki was lapping at speeds of just under 110mph.

So, the next round is something of a lottery, we're afraid. Nevertheless, we require your entries (on a postcard) at AUTOSPORT Editorial, 76 Dean Street, London W1A 1BU, to reach us not later than Friday, January 27.



Non-qualifying debutants in Buenos Aires last weekend. Top: Eddie Cheever tried hard to qualify the new Theodore, but was plagued with practice problems. Above: Divina Galica had a testing shunt with the Olympus Hesketh. Below: Two Lotus 78s qualified, Hector Rebaque's did not.



NZ win for Riley

Keijo Rosberg continued on his winning way in the third meeting of the Stuyvesant series at Manfeild last Sunday, and now holds an 18pts lead in the championship from Larry Perkins (see table). However, he won only the second of the two races at the 1.88-mile Palmerston circuit, for in the first race his Opert engine blew, leaving victory to none other than Brett Riley, the Formula 3 driver going really well.

Neither of these men, however, qualified on the pole, for former NZ champion David Oxtan was fastest in both sessions with his Chevron. Oxtan's best lap was undertaken in 65.50s (almost 4secs outside Graeme Lawrence's F5000 lap record). Second fastest—just—was Rosberg at 65.62, with his team-mate Rahal only a hundredth slower. Riley qualified fourth at 65.67, and was followed by Perkins (65.85), Melville (65.97), Millen (66.08), McMillan (66.33), Sullivan (66.58) and Smith (66.67).

Into the lead at the start of the first of the two 29-lap races went Rosberg, but his engine blew after only three laps. Riley had managed to get the better of Rahal at the start, and as Rosberg dropped out he went past Oxtan and into the lead. Oxtan was slowed by a puncture, and gradually dropped back, letting the American Opert Chevron driver into second place. However, there was no catching Riley, the Kiwi having a real 'on' day. The March 76B ran out the winner with Rahal second, and Perkins third, the Australian having been slowed by a water leak, which overheated his engine. Sullivan was

fourth and, after the three 'Ms' (Melville, Millen and McMillan) had hit troubles, Smith fifth ahead of Ross Stone's Cuda, Pierre Dieudonné's Ehrlich and Andrew Miedecke's March.

The second race was ruined just after the start, when there was a *mêlée* at the first corner. In the confusion, someone punted Riley off the road, and Rosberg was able to take the lead. Perkins ran in second place, but his engine had been 'cooked' earlier in the day, and he was unable to resist the challenge of McMillan, charging hard after running out of fuel in the first race when well placed.

Sullivan in fourth place was passed by Rahal, who also got by the ailing Ralt of Perkins soon after. Then the American overtook McMillan to make it an Opert one-two, and that was how it finished, with Rahal about 5secs behind Rosberg. Sullivan got the bit between his teeth towards the end of the race and found a way past McMillan to finish third, 3 secs down and closing on the American, and only just ahead of McMillan and Perkins. Melville was sixth, in front of Millen and Smith. Oxtan, unfortunately, was one of those involved in the first corner shunt, and Riley, who got going again after the incident, dropped out halfway through with a sick engine.

The only British driver doing the series, Ian Grob, retired when he went off on the tenth lap of the first race, wiping off the nose section of his Alan Docking March 77B.

Before his engine went off, Perkins set the fastest lap of the meeting.



Daly: excellent driver. . . .

The top two

Although I rate Derek Daly as an excellent driver, I feel that recent publicity has depicted Daly as the one and only talent in F3. By no stretch of the imagination can you say that Daly ran away with *all* the success in F3. From the Major European Formula 3 results published in AUTOSPORT: Daly won seven races while Stephen South won six; Daly was second twice while South was second four times; both were third three times.

From these results South appears equally as good, if not better, so how can it be said that Daly is 'the top driver in everyone's eyes'. South won the Vandervell Championship by a consistent margin while Daly was only fifth. Daly won the BP Championship, but the press seem to have ignored the fact that it all rested on the final race and Stephen finished equal second.

There are two top drivers in F3—Stephen South and Derek Daly—and I think it is unfair that so much publicity has been directed at Daly when South is equally superb.

BIRMINGHAM 45. NICOLA STOKES (Miss)

South: equally superb. . . .



Not so new

I didn't think I would ever be sufficiently aroused to find myself writing to *Correspondence*, but I felt I could not let the naming of the new Rees/Oliver/Southgate F1 team pass without registering my comments.

Regular Formula Ford also-rans will already be familiar with this name, recalling perhaps that my Arrow FF has occupied many a lowly grid position over the past 18 months around the more southerly circuits.

What with Andy Best's Getem showing Tyrrell the way to go on front suspension layout and now my name being pinched, Formula Ford would seem to have an unending fund of ideas for the professionals to borrow! What next, I wonder—Frank Williams' Saudia front suspension has more than a passing similarity to Royale's RP24 inboard ideas. Could the racing get to be as good as well?!

Anyway all success to this new team. I hope they have as much success with Arrows as I have had enjoyment.

PURLEY, SURREY.

EDWARD JOHNSON

Sliding scale

I would like to comment on the increasingly popular subject of the points scoring system in Formula 1.

I agree that three points is not a big enough margin between first and second. Couldn't the difference be based on the time gap between the cars? Then, if it is an easy victory, you will win by more points, and if it is close, the points difference would be less.

Everybody has been very quick to say, 'Mario should be champion' but I still say that Niki is and should be champ. Lauda knew that he could get six points by coming second and so there was no point in risking anything by always going for outright victory like Andretti. If the scoring system was changed then Niki would also change his driving.

I think he is a very shrewd man and a great driver. Best of luck to him. I hope he carries on scoring as he has done this season until the system is changed.

ELSTREE, HERTS.

JOHN LAZARUS

We were there

On behalf of Tony Halliwell and our sponsors, Fairview Estates, I would like to correct the impression given in last week's FF1600 *Seasonal Survey* that we were 'rarely seen in National events.' In addition to the KM races, we did in fact contest 20 of the Townsend Thoresen rounds (missing the others due to a mid-season shunt) and were, I would suggest, one of the more competitive non-works teams.

SIDCUP, KENT.

B. E. COX

Licensing ours

Luckily for us non-British, the new FIA licensing system was not made in Britain, because it would probably have read: A grade: a driver who within 12 months has at least five places in the top five of a G8 event; or ten or more placings in the first five in BP and Vandervell F3 races in the past 24 months.

If your intention is to be an International racing driver (F1), you *have* to start to race internationally immediately you graduate into F3.

According to my calculations the following drivers now qualify for an A licence:

From F2: Didier Pironi 8, Rene Arnoux 7, Eddie Cheever 7, Riccardo Patrese 6, Ingo Hoffman 5, Alberto Colombo 5 and Bruno Giacomelli 4 + 2 from F3.

From F3: Piercarlo Ghinzani 17, Conny Andersson 14, Anders Olofsson 13, Bertram Schäfer 12, Gianfranco Brancatelli 10 and the 'old' man himself Ulf Svensson 10.

There are not very many drivers with a British licence in there so they obviously need to stop racing in club events or give the BP and Vandervell series International status. That would make it possible for the non RAC-licence holder to compete in those events.

What makes a Formula 1 driver A graded? Having raced, practised or just sat in an F1 car? What rules which ones of the following drivers are A graded? Boy Hayje, Lamberto Leoni, Divina Galica or Hector Rebaque. When you have been A graded, do you stay so until you retire? If Jackie Stewart and Rikki von Opel decided to make a comeback would they both be A graded?

If you find you have run out of Formula 1 drivers, MRC will probably be able to provide you with the telephone numbers to the qualified drivers mentioned above!

MALMÖ, SWEDEN.

JÖRAN HEDBERG

Just deserts

I am writing to say how much I agree with Nick Syrett (*Correspondence*, January 12). I was beginning to think that I was the only supporter Jochen had! I have had letters printed in two motor sport magazines supporting him, but nobody agreed with me.

With the machinery given him, I feel Jochen has driven extremely well this past season. I hope, as team leader in 1978, he will have the success with ATS he so richly deserves.

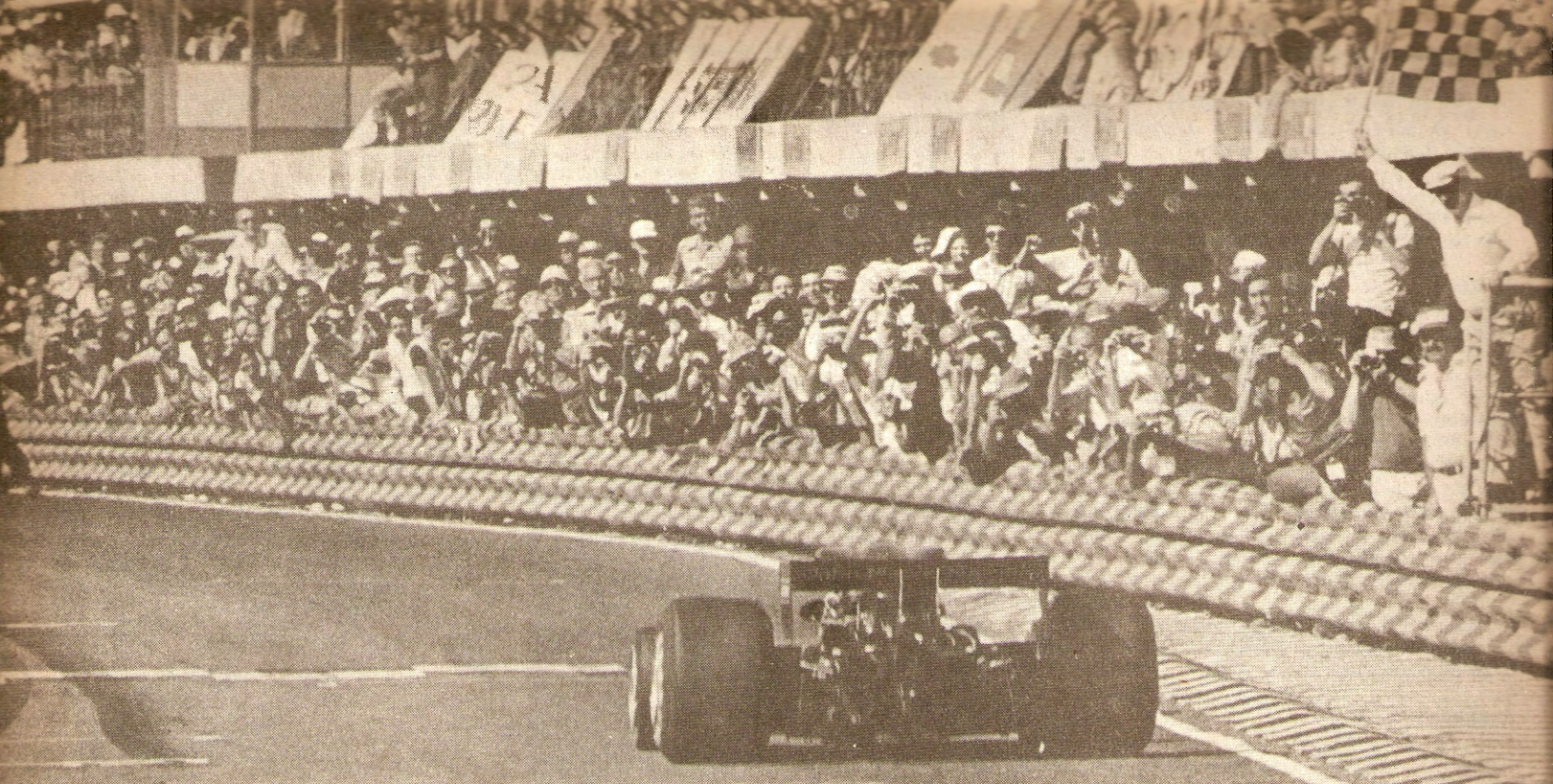
I will again stress my point that he must be one of the best all-rounders in the world, with his performances in F1, F2 and the World Championship for Makes.

WARRINGTON, CHESHIRE.

DIANE KNIGHT

Then as now?

In our third *Seasonal Survey* of the 1952 season (AUTOSPORT, January 16, 1953) we took a close look at Europe's most popular racing category, Formula 3. British drivers and chassis continued to dominate virtually all events with major honours shared evenly between the Cooper and Kieft *marques*. Most successful Briton in Continental events was Les Leston (Cooper) who scored outright wins at Luxembourg, Orleans and Porrentruy. On the home front it was Don Parker (Kieft) who took the AUTOSPORT £200 500cc championship following a formidable number of wins in club races during the year. Others to shine included Stirling Moss (Kieft and Cooper), Stuart Lewis-Evans, George Wicken and John Coombs (Coopers), Andre Loens (Erskine-Staride and Kieft) and Reg Bicknell with his Revis, the most successful one-off chassis. John Cooper took his superb Cooper Streamliner to victory at the Grenzlandrennen at over 102mph which was an amazing achievement so soon after another memorable win at Rouen le Essarts. On the subject of the '500s' a Manchester firm launched its new sports car, known as the CSC 650, which was based upon the F3-type chassis and featured a BSA vertical-twin engine capable of propelling the machine at 75mph. Twenty-five years ago this week we also ran a feature on Australian racing with details of the late Stan Jones's Maybach Special which had been so successful in the previous two seasons 'down under'.



For Andretti, Buenos Aires was easier than he could have dared to hope. Starting from the pole, Mario led all the way.

Superwop blows 'em away

Easy win for Andretti and Lotus—Lauda's Brabham second from Depailler's Tyrrell—Hunt fourth—Watson retires—The tyre war is on—
Report and photography: JEFF HUTCHINSON.

"I was able to control the pace of the race, keep the gap around 15secs with no problem, and the car ran perfectly all the way. You can't get any better than that. I just hope we can keep it up." Those were the words of a delighted Mario Andretti, who kicked off the 1978 World Championship with such a convincing victory that he was in a class of his own, his 'old' Lotus 78 showing the rest of the opposition that there is a lot of life in it yet.

It was also a convincing win for Goodyear. Andretti just snatched the pole from Carlos Reutemann's Michelin-shod Ferrari, which failed to live up to its pre-race form. A wrong choice of tyres for the race left 'Lole' fighting a losing battle to hold on to an early second place, and he eventually finished up seventh. Fooled by the effects of a rain-washed, abrasive track in practice, the Michelin men chose a harder compound for the race, which was also run in much hotter conditions than practice. The decision turned out to be their downfall, for the track soon changed with a fresh coating of rubber and oil, and Reutemann's car was lost for grip. A pit stop at half-distance for four softer compound tyres transformed the car for the final laps, but by that time, as Reutemann put it, "I was just tyre testing."

The subdued, but capacity crowd perked up in the final laps when Reutemann got

going on soft tyres to re-pass several of the midfield runners, including his own Ferrari team-mate Gilles Villeneuve, who chose to struggle on with his similar tyre problem to the finish.

Mario's nearest challengers for most of the race were the two Brabham-Alfa Romeos, John Watson passing Niki Lauda to lead the Brabham attack until three-quarters distance, when he dropped out with a blown engine brought about by a water leak. Lauda moved up into second place after yet another carefully judged race. "My car was understeering a bit in the beginning on full tanks, so I slowed up and John went by," said Niki, his conservative start probably saving him second place at the finish when he was pushed hard in the closing laps by Patrick Depailler, who drove a superb race fighting his badly understeering Elf-Tyrrell 008.

It had been a hard fight all weekend for Depailler, first from the back of the grid to the fifth row in practice after overnight suspension changes greatly improved the car, and then from the fifth row to third place. He was the surprise of the race. "It was a surprise for me, too. The car understeered all the race, and was very difficult to drive, yet I was catching up the cars in

front," said Patrick, who managed to find a way by Lauda briefly but was firmly chopped back into third place a few moments later.

A few yards behind after an equally difficult race came the Marlboro-McLaren M26 of James Hunt, three points being his only consolation for a miserable weekend during which he never got close to his now customary head of the field. "I just couldn't get a good balance with the car between fast and slow corners," said James, whose race was spoiled by bad understeer in the slower corners which caused the front left tyre to break down, and an unpleasant steering vibration for most of the race, "not to mention two sore arms."

Understeer was Ronnie Peterson's problem in the second JPS Lotus. After a strong start, the Swede fell further and further back as the situation worsened along with the diminishing fuel load. He also had different tyres to Andretti, which did not help, but despite his problems he too was happy to finish in the points in his first race of the year.

Patrick Tambay won a race-long duel with Gilles Villeneuve's Ferrari to take the final point for McLaren, Reutemann's closing chase for sixth place being brought to a halt a lap early when Juan Manuel Fangio mistakenly gave the chequered flag to Peterson instead of Andretti.

Emerson Fittipaldi took an encouraging ninth after his poor late 1977 performances, while Jody Scheckter, winner of this race last year on his first outing for the Wolf team, had what must have been his worst weekend with the team, his car handling badly all weekend and ending up no higher than tenth.

Other than the battle for second place, it was a race that held little interest, even for the racing-mad Argentines. There were still 17 runners at the finish, so there was no lack of cars like the previous year, but the trouble was that, with the revival of the tyre war, the field has been split up even further. The Goodyear 'chosen few' now make the pace or break it.

"Any country that needs an army to win the Grand Prix shouldn't have one in the first place," said Alan Jones, as we bounced our way from pothole to pothole along the beaten-up Buenos Aires backstreets, our lives not very delicately balanced in the hands of an ageing taxi driver, whose style of driving could loosely be described as the Gonzalez crouch. The fact that he had lived long enough to get grey hair and rounded shoulders was one small point in our favour.

Sid Taylor had hired a car, and managed only a few kilometres before writing it off and leaving it 'parked' on the pavement, then hailing a taxi. David Benson of the *Daily Express* was luckier in the city's other hire car. He kept it running, but was minus a front wing and headlight after they had been neatly severed by a passing bumper.

The pothole-ridden, cobbled streets, the suicide driving 'technique' of the locals, and Argentina's ruling army were Alan's first impression of the Argentine capital and the start of the 1978 World Championship of Drivers. There is a lot to be said for Alan's point of view, especially when you are looking at the wrong end of a heavily notched (seriously, folks) whatever-it-is automatic rifle, and seeing the cold look in the eyes of the man holding it.

The Grand Prix was obviously a pre-World Cup target for would-be troublemakers, and security was even tighter than ever before. Even parking your car each morning became a military operation. Secure is the last thing it all made us feel, but the situation had its lighter moments, like seeing a heavily armed pit lane soldier stick his hand in his tunic to pull out a race programme and beg James Hunt for his autograph just like any other race fan. It was also positively amazing what a few dozen racing decals could do to smooth troubled waters. They were better than money, and in Argentina's case, with an inflation rate expressed in hundreds, they were probably worth more, too.

The military men posed just one of the many problems which, for most of the 27-person field of racers, the 1978 Argentine GP had waiting in store from the moment the cars first took to the track.

ENTRY

With the switch to Michelin tyres to contend with, it came as no surprise to see the Ferrari team stick to their tried and proven 312T2 chassis for these two opening races so far from home. Since last year, the front track has been widened to the same as the new 312T3 chassis, and the rear track has also been slightly widened. Otherwise the cars remain the same as before, and are of course fitted with the latest, more powerful flat-12 engine units.

Brabham had two brand-new chassis at this race, first seen in the recent Ricard test session before Christmas. The monocoque is based on the BT45 chassis but with a few detail changes, while the most obvious changes in the new BT45C are the front and rear modifications. A new lower nose section has been fitted to the 'C' to let more air to the tyres and eliminate the overheating problems which the front

tyres suffered last year at hot races, while the rear end of the car has also been considerably tidied up. Deep sideplates form the supports for a tubular-mounted rear-wing assembly like the Wolf, while Gordon Murray has also used the tube to carry the air and rear fire-extinguisher bottles. "From the bulkhead back, the rear end is all BT46," said Murray. Other differences include minor cockpit shape changes. The Brabham T-car was the original BT45/1 converted to the latest spec, "which has now done about 17,000 miles without winning a race," mused Murray.

Lotus, like most of the front-runners, pinned their hopes on their last year cars. Mario's was as run in Japan, while Peterson's was still running the Lotus gearbox and revised rear suspension geometry which was first used at Ricard. Both drivers liked the new rear suspension geometry: "It's a lot more forgiving than the standard set-up," said Mario. But because it is only matched with the new gearbox, Ronnie's car was back in standard trim when the new 'box still showed signs of teething troubles and was replaced by a Hewland. The problem seems to lie with hot and cold clearances within the 'box, which Lotus are confident will soon be overcome.

McLaren were back to 'standard' M26 configuration for this race, the only external visible difference being new wind deflectors around the front of the rear wheels, although Hunt's new chassis, M26/4, was also considerably stronger internally following lessons learnt from his Mosport crash.

With Shadow there was nothing new. It had been a rush simply to get the cars from last year ready in time, following the weeks wasted after Japan while the future of the team was decided. Don Nichols expects the new DN9 chassis to be testing in early February, and it may well make its debut in South Africa if testing goes well.

The Surtees TS19s were as per last season, as was the Hesketh 308E but for cut back rear bodywork.

Ligier-Matra raced their car in the same specification as Japan, their new gearbox/rear suspension layout (seen at Ricard) probably not appearing until Monaco along with a new body shape. A rumour is still circulating that Ligier will shortly be swapping to Ford power following Matra's unwillingness to carry on with their V12 racing engine. In fact, the situation is being reviewed shortly, and could well be based on the sort of results the team have in these opening races.

The new Saudia Williams FW06 has benefited considerably since its Ricard tests from a visit to a wind tunnel, a new rear wing shape making the car much more effective.

The Copersucar-Fittipaldi has undergone heavy modification since its last appearance. The radiators are now mounted on the side of the monocoque (like the Lotus), but with simple glassfibre pods covering the rads and without the aerodynamic effects used on the 78. The front suspension is also completely new, with inboard coil springs operated by a rocking arm, like most of the other successful designs. Both cars at this race were to the latest spec, Emerson's T-car a brand new chassis.

"We have made a lot of minute detail changes, but nothing that changes the original concept of the car," said Peter Warr, talking about the Wolf WR4 (the team using the updated WR1 as the spare chassis). After extensive testing at Kyalami (and a 1m 15.6s, three-tenths quicker than the pole last year), the team's performance at Buenos Aires can only be described as disappointing.

The complex instrumentation fitted to Depailler's Tyrrell only at this race seems to be bearing the fruits of Karl Kampff's labour for, as a result of Ricard readings, Depailler's car (and later Pironi's) featured a revised top front suspension pick-up point. During the course of practice, Depailler's lap times were improved to shift him from the back to the front end of the grid following considerable overnight suspension alterations.

The Merzario team made their first appearance with their new Merzario A1 chassis, a straightforward Grand Prix kit car which looks a lot heavier than Arturo's original drawing suggested. He certainly seems no worse off than he was with his March chassis, and he seems to be better off than he would have been trying to run another kit car built by somebody else.

The Ensign team raced the same two chassis, with which they finished last year's season, Lamberto Leoni getting Tambay's car, now updated to the revised rear suspension which went on to the back of the ex-Regazzoni chassis at the end of last season.

The Theodore chassis shows its obvious Ralt heritage and, while not looking particularly attractive, it remains to be seen whether it goes better than it looks. This meeting was hardly a fair test of its potential, or that of its new driver, Eddie Cheever.

PRACTICE

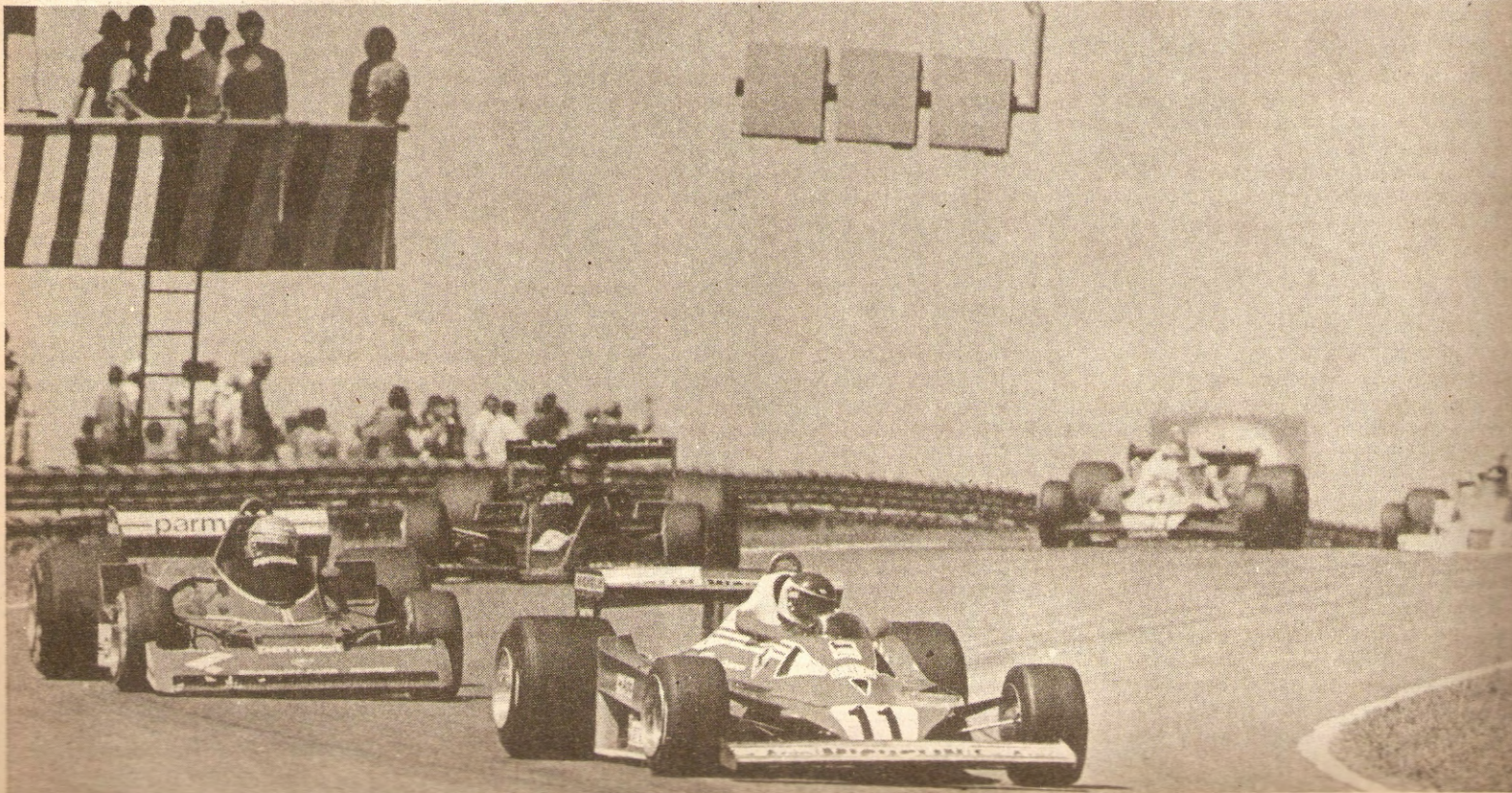
Before the official sessions on Friday and Saturday, there was a two-hour unofficial period on Thursday.

Divina Galica damaged her new Olympus-backed Hesketh 308E while attempting to take the long, 160mph-plus, sixth-gear right-hander flat for the first time. She was lucky to lose no more than a front corner after spinning into the barrier. Hesketh had a spare car, too, so she was given a second chance.

So too was Didier Pironi, who, while getting used to his brand-new Tyrrell 008, managed to crash, putting a couple of nasty kinks in the monocoque which were fortunately patchable for the following day's official practice. "I pulled over to let another car through, got two wheels on the grass and spun," said Didier, after taking a long and what must have seemed an endless walk almost the full length of the pit lane back to the Elf-Tyrrell pit.

Divina and Didier were not the only ones wearing thoughtful expressions on their faces. Trevor Hoskins and his merry men of Wolverhampton had lost their usual smiles in the face of Goodyear's most serious challenge yet, from the Michelin-men swarming around the Ferrari pit. With what must have been at least a quarter of Goodyear's 1500-total tyres shipped

In the early stages, Reutemann's Ferrari leads Lauda's Brabham. Lole dropped back with tyre troubles while Niki went on to finish second. Peterson's Lotus follows.



continued

in for this race, Michelin were doing for Ferrari alone what Goodyear had to do for 25 other cars! After a four-year monopoly, the change from an all-for-one-and-one-for-all tyre policy proved to be a difficult one, especially for those teams without favoured Goodyear supplies. They had forgotten what a tyre war was like!

Tyres, either the lack of them or what to choose for those lucky enough to have the choice, were the main talking point now. The choice became even more difficult during the opening day's practice, which was run in cool weather and was interrupted in both sessions by sudden summer downpours.

Mario Andretti, resting his hopes on last year's tried and proven Lotus type 78 chassis, had set the pace on Thursday in the unofficial testing, but on Friday it was Argentina's Carlos Reutemann who stole the headlines and really stirred up the tyre war with a 1m 47.84s, almost a second quicker than James Hunt's 1977 pole time of 0.2sec faster than Mario's best. For the first time for a long time, his Ferrari 312T2 was looking like it should. Gone were the fishtailing antics halfway through corners we had seen just a couple of months ago in Japan. Now Reutemann could feed in the power early and hard, and the car would simply sit back and go. It looked good, but the S9 tyres (which had been used to take fastest lap the first day during the few minutes of dry track between rain showers) were not going to stand 53 laps of a hot race day, which was forecast.

Andretti lost all the first session with a fuel metering unit problem. In the second, he just started to get going on a new set of tyres when his engine went bang. In the brief 18 laps he had completed, he had come closest to catching the Ferrari.

On Saturday, the rain had been blown away by a strong breeze running dead against the cars down most of the long straight. The battle for pole position was on, not between Hunt and Andretti like last year, but between Andretti and Reutemann and, of course, Goodyear and Michelin. Mario won.

With no mechanical troubles this time, Andretti waited until just before the end of practice to go out and set a best of 1m 47.7s, good enough to take the pole. Reutemann had found his car badly affected by the strong wind, and when he tried the same soft compound tyres that had worked so well the previous day he found the car sliding dangerously towards the edge of the road, where before he could have held the same line with no problem. "I tried harder tyres and the car was much better", he said, but his best time was a relatively slow 1.49.95s. Pole was gone, but Michelin still had the front row.

Ronnie Peterson was racing in the other JPTL seat, whatever number it was. He started out the first day with his chassis fitted with a Lotus gearbox and

revised rear suspension geometry, and took fifth best time despite never managing a full lap without at least one gear selection problem. "When it works it is good, but I still have a bit of a problem to get the gears every time," said Ronnie. His car was converted to the Hewland set-up for Saturday, and Ronnie responded with an even better time to head the second row.

The Brabhams came next, John Watson narrowly heading Niki Lauda in the first day's times. Lauda's practice was spoiled by a fuel pump problem which prevented him trying any of the different rubber available. During the hotter Saturday practice, the Brabham drivers were unable to break the 1m 50.0s barrier, Niki's car suffering from a down-on-power engine while John was complaining of bad balance. Both cars started to understeer badly on Saturday, Niki suspecting that the rain had washed off the grip which the track had gained on Friday. Front tyres were wearing out fast, even though the new nose shape had overcome the original tyre overheating problems which had given the Brabhams so many problems last season.

James Hunt started off his New Year from the third row of the grid, a blown engine having interrupted his Saturday morning tyre sorting, although he did not offer the resultant switch to the T-car for the final session as any sort of excuse. In fact, he set his fastest lap of practice in the T-car, and put down his grid position as "Just not quick enough." His car was oversteering on the fast corners and understeering on the slower ones, which he could only compromise and not cure altogether.

Gilles Villeneuve came next in the other Michelin-shod Ferrari. The Canadian's driving style seems to have benefited greatly from all the winter testing sessions, although his practice laps were still punctuated by several spins and escapes up the sliproad, none of them with any serious consequences.

Jacques Laffite was another driver forced into his T-car for the final session after his race car lost compression on one cylinder during the morning run. Like Hunt, he set his best time in the worst conditions, his Friday having been spoiled by an electrical problem which kept him even farther down the grid. His times on Saturday were not as good as he had hoped, for he was sure that he could have gone even faster had he not been badly held up in heavy traffic just as he was setting his quickest laps.

Patrick Tambay's official debut for the McLaren team was an impressive one. Despite a broken engine the first day, he held eighth place behind Hunt on the timesheets, and the following day kept his place despite being unable to match his first day times.

The biggest surprise of practice was Patrick Depailler's performance in the new Tyrrell 008. At the end of the first day he only just scraped on to the grid with 24th fastest time, his team-mate Pironi in 23rd place. Depailler had wasted much of the first day with fuel system and electrical troubles, but even though he had not managed more than 20 laps all day, his

times should not have been that bad. A change of front suspension geometry to lower the car's roll centre at the front, following careful analysis of the Ricard testing tapes in the on-board instrumentation system, seemed to do little to help the car's almost undrivable condition. But an overnight revision of all the spring rates and suspension settings transformed the car on Saturday. Depailler's gloom changed to a wide smile as he improved his time by more than three whole seconds. Didier Pironi managed a half-second improvement on his times after his chassis was brought to a specification close to Depailler's, but the lack of a second set of different springs for the number two car made it impossible for Didier to match the times of his team leader.

Both the ATS drivers failed to improve on their Friday times. Mass was slower than his team-mate on Friday when ATS's development engineer, Martin Walters, "went the wrong way at the wrong time with wing adjustments." Mass got the new car working better on Saturday, but he was still not happy with the way the car was turning into the corners: like many, he was getting bad understeer on the slow turns. Jarier was more happy with his performance.

Vittorio Brambilla split the two ATS cars with a best lap of 1:49.91. That had come right at the beginning of the first session while most of the top runners were struggling to break 1:50.0! Then came his first crash. "It jumps out of gear in the esses," said Vittorio, after badly damaging the front of his race car, although not irreparably. While that was being repaired, he then went out in the team's T-car in the afternoon session, and crashed that one as well. Back in his original car on Saturday, he managed just one flying lap before another stop to repair a damaged nose section after another incident, and then his practice came to a final halt shortly before the end of the last session when his engine lost compression on one cylinder.

Rupert Keegan made a steady debut for his new team in the second Surtees, setting 19th best time despite a down-on-power engine on the first day, when he set his fastest laps.

Alan Jones shared the seventh row of the grid with Mass, his practice being "good and bad." Without any other tyres but the standard rubber, and with an engine which progressively lost power as practice went along, Alan set a good time. "The car is really good and there have been no problems, although if it gets much hotter we could have an oil temperature problem," said Alan. "My only mistake was not asking for the engine to be changed on Friday, because we had found a lot of little things wrong and thought that was the trouble." If the new Saudia Williams finished the race, then it was sure to be a lot higher up than it had started.

Finishing is the name of the game in a race like Argentina, as Jody Scheckter can testify after his surprise victory last year. It was certainly his only hope this year, for one year on, with what is basically the same car, he found himself back on the eighth row of the grid with a Wolf that he described as "totally unpredictable." Understeer is my biggest problem, but what makes it worse is the fact that some laps it will go through a corner fine, and the next it wants to go straight on," said a puzzled Jody, who found the same thing when he was forced to switch to the T-car after gearbox trouble with his new WR4 race car just at the start of the final hour.

The two Shadow DN8s for Clay Regazzoni and Hans Stuck were not faring very well at this circuit, either. Neither Stuck nor Regazzoni could get the cars handling to their liking, while a broken engine in the final session spoiled any chance of improving on Hans's Friday times. Regazzoni held 16th place on the grid and Stuck 18th, and sandwiched between them was the latest Copersucar FA5 of Emerson Fittipaldi. He too was finding it difficult to balance his car, and was another to join the fast-growing number of engine blow-ups, even though the weather was far kinder in practice than can normally be expected.

Sharing the tenth row with Keegan was the plucky little Arturo Merzario and his new Merzario A1 chassis. Arturo was doing his usual job of driving on top of any problems, but the problems got on top of him when he was trying just a bit too hard on Saturday morning and the car got away from him at the fast left-hand flick in the infield section. The car went through two rows of catchfencing, and then on and into the barrier, badly damaging the front end. That was the end of practice for Saturday, so Arturo stripped off his overalls and joined his dedicated small crew in bashing the car straight again, straight enough to run it in the race.

Danny Ongais and Lamberto Leoni were closely matched in the two identical Ensign chassis which ended up sharing the 11th row of the grid. Both drivers, especially Ongais, showed no concern about pushing their cars right to the limit, but neither could get the handling balanced well enough to go any faster.

Last of the qualifiers, on the back row along with Pironi, was Brett Lunger in his usual McLaren M23, which suffered several minor problems and a more

Mario holds the trophy aloft after his seventh Grand Prix victory.



...one when he was forced to switch to a rear suspension cross-member supporting bolt failure, exactly the same one which had put James Hunt out of this race while leading last year.

Hector Rebaque came very close to qualifying his Lotus 78 in place of Lunger, but after the first day he failed to balance his car, which had been upset by a switch to steel springs instead of the titanium ones with which it had started out. Peterson's change back to the Hewland set-up meant that Lotus needed them back again.

Eddie Cheever had a miserable time with the new Theodore. The first day he spent most of practice in and out of the pits with a fuel problem, and even the laps that he did do were spoiled by the lack of second gear. His second day's practice was spoiled after one lap when an oil plug came adrift, and the engine pumped out all its oil and started to tighten up as he drove back to the pits. A fresh engine was fitted for the final session, but that, he complained, was down on power. Despite lowering his time by a full second from the first day, he was still well out of the race.

So, too, was Divina Galica, who tried hard but, without the experience to get the most from her car, did not even come close to qualifying.

One thing had quickly emerged from practice: it was going to be a race of tyres. But, come Saturday night, most drivers were still scratching their heads as to which rubber they would use. The pre-race morning warm-up session was going to be more vital than ever.

THE GRAND PRIX

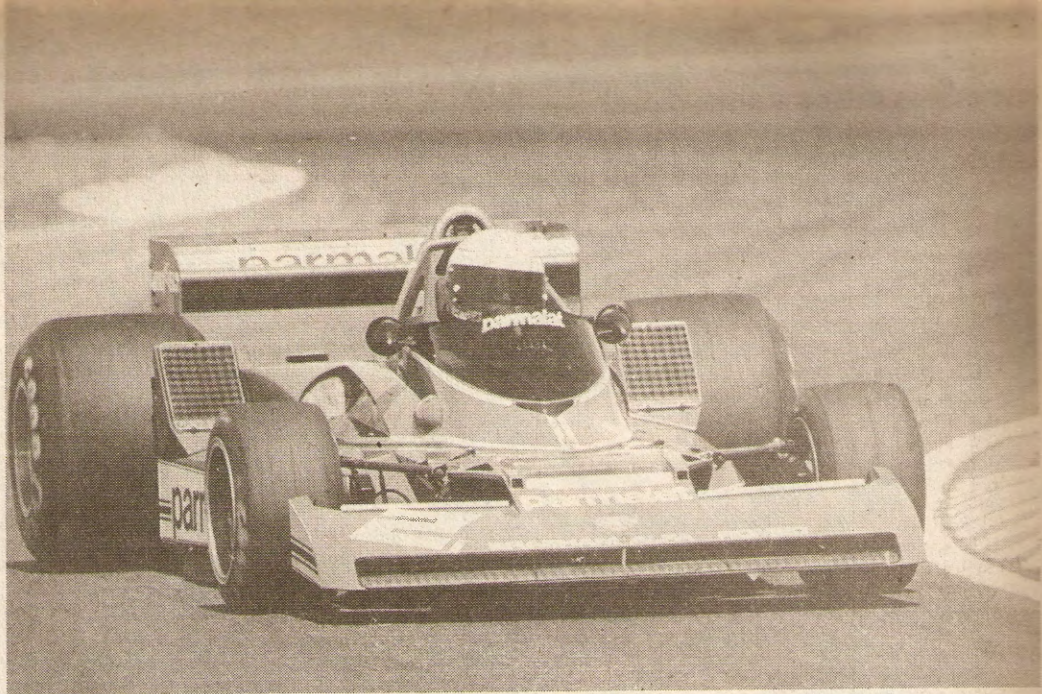
Fears of a scorching hot race day to complicate tyre decisions, and create the odd touch-and-go cooling problems with some cars, were soon justified. The Formula 1 cars had already become mobile ovens as the teams waited in the early morning traffic queues caused by the elaborate security precautions.

The 30-minute pre-race practice session went off without incident, most teams concentrating on tyres, ensuring that their decisions about what to race were the right ones.

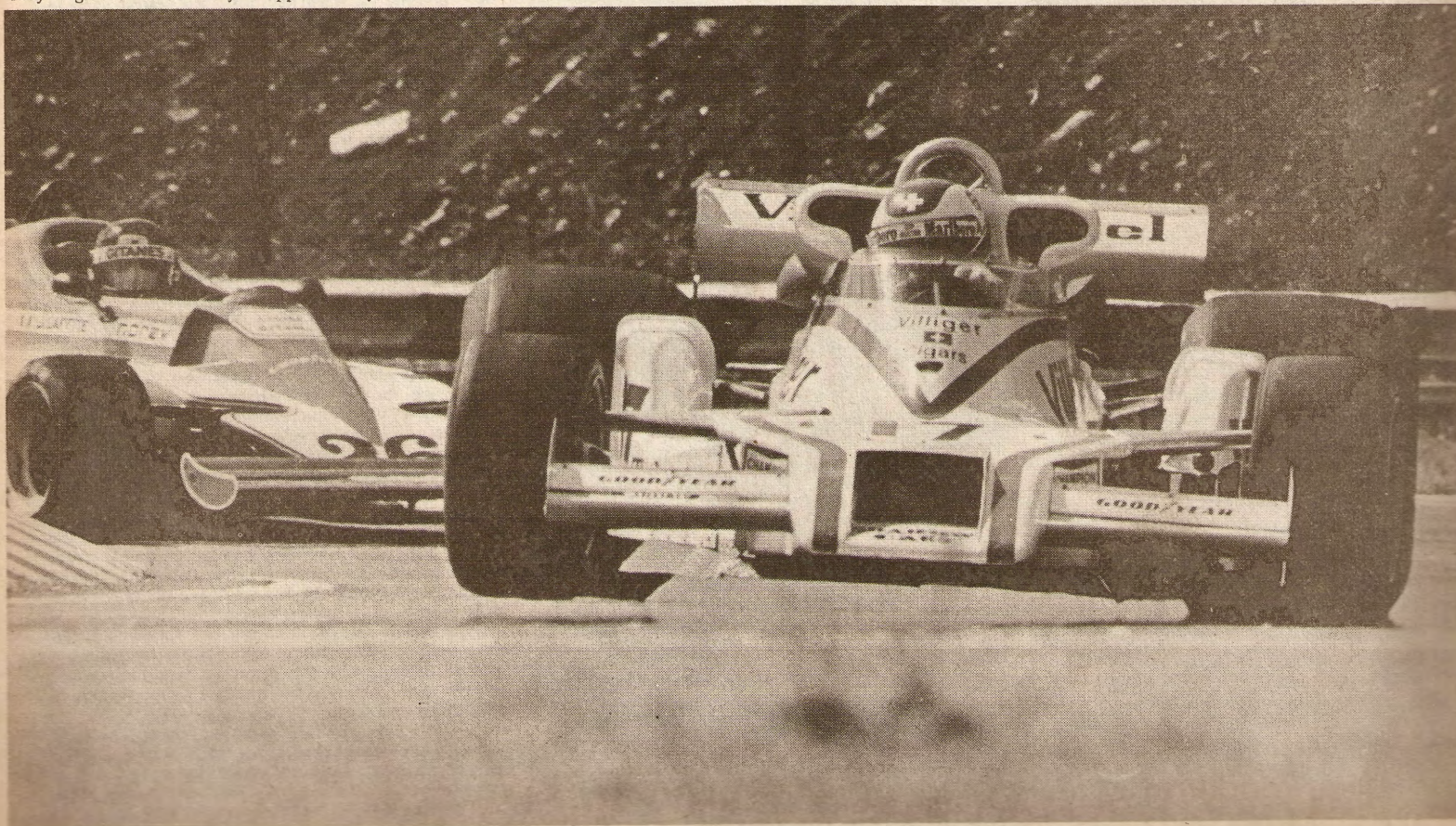
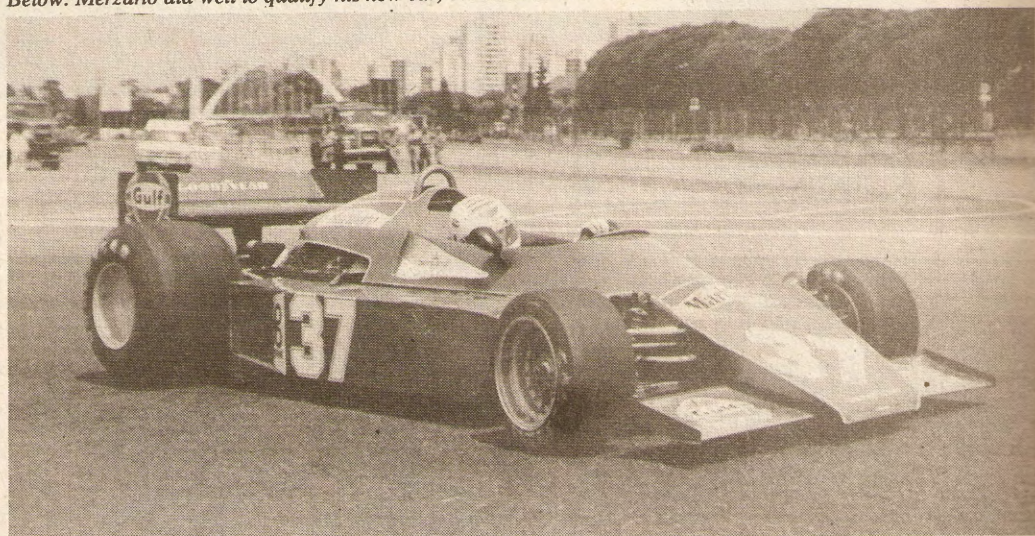
Merzario had managed to patch his car back together again and, with no other serious mechanical problems, it meant that Rebaque had to sit on the sidelines for the first race of the season, along with Cheever and Galica.

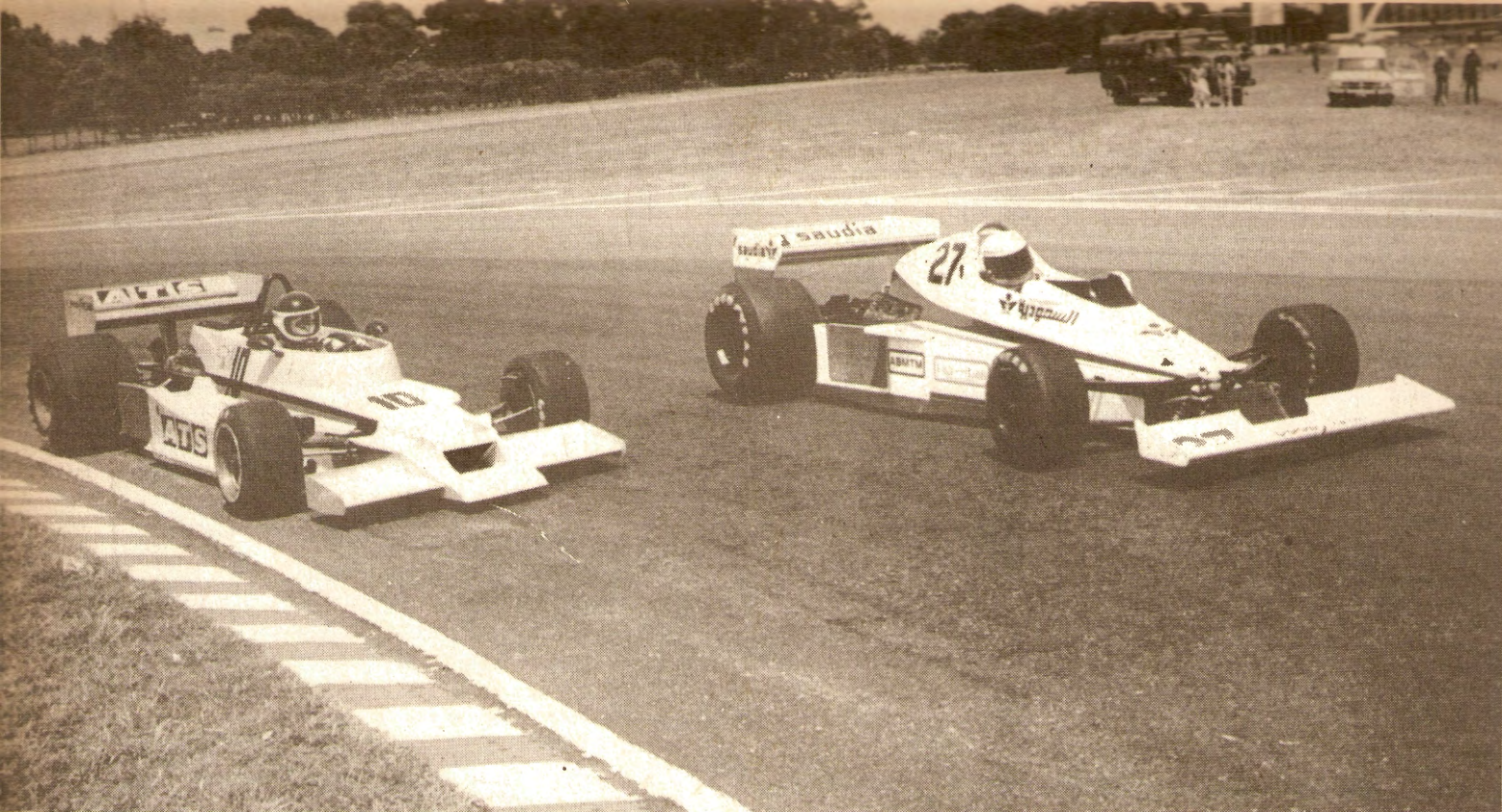
A sign of what was to come, unknown to us at a few minutes before 3pm, came when Depailler led the field round to line up on the dummy grid, instead of the expected Carlos Reutemann. But when the 'home' driver did finally appear, a couple of minutes later, there was the traditional ticker-tape greeting as 100,000 ripped-up programmes were launched skyward at the same time, backed by the Lole-Lole-Lole chant that actually manages to drown the sound of the engines. Only now did the 1978 season really feel as though it had begun.

Mario, Niki, John, James had all opted to run the Clay Regazzoni made his first appearance for Shadow, but both he and Stuck were out of contention all weekend.



Above: Watson was on superb form with his Brabham-Alfa, but retired from a secure second place near the end.
Below: Merzario did well to qualify his new car, but retired in the race.





Jean-Pierre Jarier (left) was delighted with his revised ATS, proving quicker than team-mate Jochen Mass. Alan Jones (right) went well, but retired soon after half-distance.

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ARGENTINE GP

continued

quick practice Goodyear tyres instead of going for a 'safe' harder race tyre. Michelin, on the other hand, after Carlos's experiences on soft tyres in the heat of Saturday, opted for a harder race tyre. The bets were drawn.

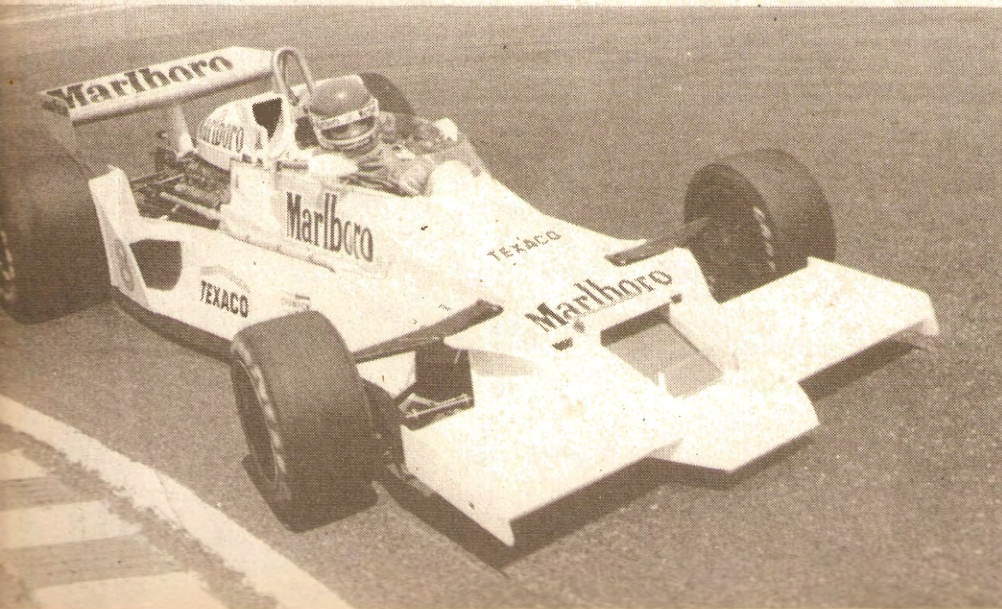
Fangio pressed the button, the light went red, then almost immediately switched to green. Mario made a beach of a start and was clean ahead as the rest of the field followed him through the first turn, Reutemann right behind the Lotus, with Peterson almost getting to him in third place.

As we waited for the fading roar to pick up again while the field made its way around the long leg out, around the lake and a foul smelling rubbish tip at the far end, there was almost total silence from the expectant crowd. They wanted to see a red car in the lead.

But it was the still the black and gold one. Its nose dipped slowly under braking for the tight, bottom corner hairpin, and the car moved effortlessly through the turn almost before Reutemann's Ferrari had got into the corner. Behind the Ferrari's tail was a mass of colour, as 20 other cars jostled for position.

The crowd stayed silent as Mario swept on through the infield section, around the long, wide right-hand corner before the main grandstands and on down the

Below: Patrick Tambay's first drive for McLaren was impressive, the Frenchman finishing sixth. Above: The military were out in force at BA...



pits straight, already a few yards further ahead than he had been at the hairpin.

He had a couple of seconds in hand at the end of the first lap and, as the laps rolled by, the gap grew to ten, then 15secs with seemingly effortless driving. Behind Andretti, Reutemann was soon under heavy pressure from Watson who, after starting out fifth on the first lap, had climbed past Lauda on lap 3. John passed Reutemann on lap 6.

Mario was long gone by this time, and proceeded to pace his race on the lap times of Watson, who could make no impression on his lead. The Belfast driver was soon an equally safe second, however, for Reutemann did a good job holding off Peterson and then Lauda, who was past an understeering Peterson after eight laps.

On lap 5, Keegan posted the first retirement following a spin, which filled his radiators with grass, cooking his engine within a couple of laps. On lap 9, little Merzario dropped out of the fight, not with a blown engine (as a terrible noise and smoke suggested from lap 2 onwards, caused by a cracked primary pipe) but with a broken differential.

It took Lauda 14 laps to find a way by Reutemann, and when he finally went through he was followed by Depailler's Elf-Tyrrell, which had slowly picked off the other members of the queue behind Reutemann until he was next in line behind Lauda.

Reutemann's slow descent down the lap chart, matched by that of Ronnie Peterson battling with his still worsening understeer, had the effect of breaking up the field into well-spaced groups. In fact, the race would have become a tedious procession had it not been for a great midfield scrap going on between Brambilla, Jones, Fittipaldi and the two ATS cars of Mass and Jarier.

Jones, who had made a strong start ahead of Brambilla, found himself back in the midst of the bunch after a gear selection problem caused him to spin. It took another 15 laps to get back to his original 12th place, but by now there was a long gap to Tambay and Villeneuve, having a tremendous battle for tenth place just ahead.

Brambilla's race got spoiled by a suspected shock absorber problem, which caused him to have a couple of dramatic and dusty short-cuts across the infield at the sweeping downhill esses behind the pits. In the struggle to get by Vittorio, Mass collided with the back of Emerson's car hard enough to break a rear crossbeam support. Emerson carried on unperturbed, staying close enough to Mass to take his place back again as soon as he got his chance.

By half-distance, the situation was not much different. Andretti was still a comfortable leader from Watson, playing with the gap to let his pit know that all was well, while Lauda seemed content to keep third place for the time being.

Depailler was running a strong fourth ahead of Hunt, while next came Peterson's Lotus, which seemed to have sunk to about its right level of competitiveness. Laffite and Scheckter were spaced out behind the Lotus, Reutemann having gone to the pits on the same lap as Laffite went by. The Ligier's

rear wheel had gone over the Ferrari's front as Jacques slipped by at the hairpin, Reutemann giving room as he battled to stop his understeering Ferrari from going off the edge of the track.

With a new set of S10 Michelins, and no apparent damage to the front suspension (which Reutemann had suspected), the Argentine set the crowds alight once again as he fought his way back through the field from 15th place.

Making similar progress through the back end of the field, after a stop to change a badly worn front tyre, was Clay Regazzoni's Shadow. However, his charge up the field had gone almost unnoticed, for a great roar went up from the crowd every time Reutemann came up to pass a slower car. No driver held off his challenge for long, or probably wanted to do so with the 'evil eye' of so many Argentines glaring down from the huge grandstand.

As the race drew into its final third, things began to liven up a little.

Merzario's parked namesake was joined on lap 35 by both Ongais's Ensign and Jones's Williams. Ongais, who made a bad start when he could not hook a gear for a while, finally stopped for good with the rotor arm pickup broken. Jones made a stop to see if anything could be done with his problem gearbox, which was also losing oil. It was an internal spring problem, so he carried on with the same difficulties, but his race ended for another reason a few laps later when the car rolled to a halt with a fuel vapour lock.

Lap 41 suddenly saw Watson miss yet another good placing when his engine blew up because of a leaking water system, Lauda having taken second place a few laps earlier when John was forced to ease his pace. It seems that his New Year's wish for reliability has not been granted, for the time being at least.

The race-long Tambay versus Villeneuve battle finally resolved itself in Tambay's favour when, after many attempts to get by, Tambay finally managed it by feigning a move to the left and then diving to the right of the last right-hand corner, where the McLaren's better handling could overcome the Ferrari's superior power. Both cars were flat in fifth gear, and as Patrick's M26 drifted out from its tight line, Villeneuve almost put two wheels on the grass.

Once clear of the Ferrari, Tambay closed on the still-worsening Wolf of Scheckter to take seventh place, and then, within a couple of laps of the finish, he was in the points as Laffite's Matra engine blew out a great cloud of smoke from a holed piston caused by a dropped valve.

The smoke cleared for us to see Peterson move back into fifth place, which he had lost to the Ligier only three laps before.

Emerson got his revenge on Mass, whom he repassed with three laps to go. Then he stormed past Scheckter on the last lap to claim a well-earned ninth place.

Depailler made his move to get by Lauda for second place in the closing laps, but Lauda was having none of it, and firmly moved back ahead of Depailler after the Frenchman had managed to get the Tyrrell ahead for a brief moment. Hunt had a grandstand seat of the fight, but was unable to go just that little bit faster to get in and join it. Then the only fun we had had all day was spoiled as Fangio mistook the distant fifth-placed Peterson Lotus for Mario's, and stuck the flag out a lap too early.

Peterson eased off, saw some other cars still racing and decided that he had better go flat out again, so Tambay finished sixth just 5secs away, while Reutemann was cheered past Villeneuve in the closing stages to claim seventh place.

Fittipaldi, Scheckter and Mass were the only other drivers to finish on the same lap as the leader, Jarier being lapped shortly before the end, while Langer came home a distant 13th, his race spoiled by gearbox selection problems.

Pironi struggled on to finish next, his race a miserable one from start to finish because of his handling problems, which were even worse than Depailler's.

Lucky (that the flag came out a lap early) or unlucky (to have a cracked fuel union which caused him to run out of petrol), would both be correct to describe Regazzoni's race, for he was still classified 15th despite waiting for the flagfall to cross the line. His car ran out of fuel on what would have been his last lap.

Stuck in the second Shadow had a far worse time with understeer, and was classified 17th, while Vittorio's Surtees got across the line for 18th and last place despite another 'off' at the esses, without damage to the car.

Although it was a fantastic race for the Lotus team, it was hardly the Grand Prix racing to which we have become used in recent years. Even without the tyre war, it would have probably been the same result. It was like Spain last year. The tyre was just made things easier for Mario last weekend.

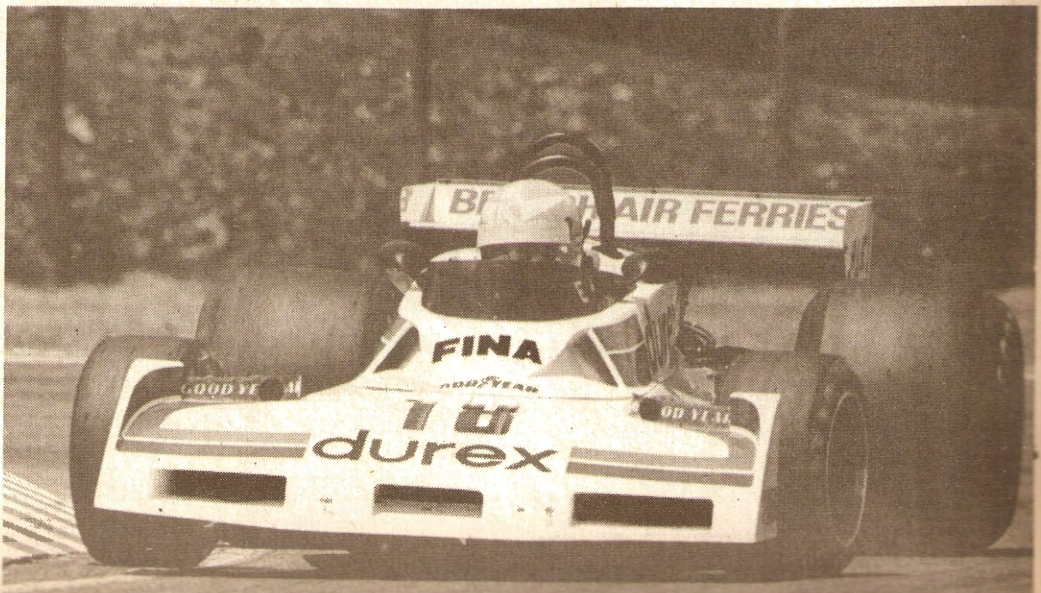
If Mario, Lotus and Goodyear can keep up the sort of performance we saw last weekend, then the rest have a whole lot of catching up to do if they don't want to be out of the running by July. . . .



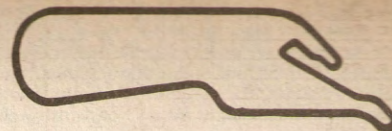
For last year's winners, Jody Scheckter and Wolf, it was an altogether miserable weekend.



Above: Jacques Laffite was well in the hunt with the Ligier-Matra but lost fifth place when the V12 blew up. Below: Rupert Keegan made his debut for Surtees but retired early after a spin.



WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 1	* LENGTH	53 laps of 3.708 mile circuit.	196.548 miles
WEATHER HOT SUN. DRY.	No. of STARTERS	24	FINISHERS 18
WINNER M. ANDRETTI in JPS-78			av. speed 119.191 mph
FASTEST LAP G. VILLENEUVE in FERRARI 312 T2	No. 12 on lap 3	in 1 min. 49.76 sec.	121.633 mph
EXISTING LAP RECORD J. HUNT in HESKETH-FORD 308		in 1 min. 50.91 sec.	120.378 mph
PREVIOUS YEAR'S RESULT J. SCHECKTER in WOLF WR1			at 117.709 mph



ENTRIES

NO	DRIVER	CAR	ENTRANT	FUEL/OIL CONTR.	TYRE	CHASSIS	ENGINE	
1	N. LAUDA	PARMALAT-BRABHAM-ALFA	PARMALAT RACING TEAM	FINA	GOOD	BT 45C-7	Alfa Flat-12	RACE CAR
1T	N. LAUDA	PARMALAT-BRABHAM-ALFA	PARMALAT RACING TEAM	FINA	GOOD	BT 45C-6	Alfa Flat-12	
2	J. WATSON	PARMALAT-BRABHAM-ALFA	PARMALAT RACING TEAM	FINA	GOOD	BT 45C-8	Alfa Flat-12	
3	D. PIRONI	ELF-TYRRELL 008	ELF TEAM TYRRELL	ELF	GOOD	008-2	DFV	
4	P. DEPAILLER	ELF-TYRRELL 008	ELF TEAM TYRRELL	ELF	GOOD	008-1	DFV	
5	M. ANDRETTI	JPS-78	JOHN PLAYER TEAM LOTUS	VALVOLINE	GOOD	78-3	DFV	
6	R. PETERSON	JPS-78	JOHN PLAYER TEAM LOTUS	VALVOLINE	GOOD	78-16	DFV	
7	J. HUNT	MARLBORO-McLAREN M26	MARLBORO TEAM McLAREN	TEXACO	GOOD	M 26/4	DFV	RACE CAR
7T	J. HUNT	MARLBORO-McLAREN M26	MARLBORO TEAM McLAREN	TEXACO	GOOD	M 26/1	DFV	
8	P. TAMBAY	MARLBORO-McLAREN M26	MARLBORO TEAM McLAREN	TEXACO	GOOD	M 26/3	DFV	
9	J. MASS	ATS HS-1	ATS RACING	-	GOOD	HS-1/1	DFV	
10	J.-P. JARIER	ATS HS-1	ATS RACING	-	GOOD	HS-1/2	DFV	
11	C. REUTEMANN	FERRARI 312 T2	S.p.a. FERRARI S.E.F.A.C.	AGIP	MICH	312 T2 031	Type 312 B	
12	G. VILLENEUVE	FERRARI 312 T2	S.p.a. FERRARI S.E.F.A.C.	AGIP	MICH	312 T2 027	Type 312 B	
14	E. FITTIPALDI	COPIERSUCAR-FITTIPALDI F5A	FITTIPALDI AUTOMOTIVE	-	GOOD	F5A/1	DFV	
16	H. STUCK	SHADOW-FORD DNB	SHADOW CARS	-	GOOD	DNB-4A	DFV	
17	C. REGAZZONI	SHADOW-FORD DNB	SHADOW CARS	-	GOOD	DNB-5A	DFV	RACE CAR
17T	C. REGAZZONI	SHADOW-FORD DNB	SHADOW CARS	-	GOOD	DNB-1A	DFV	
18	R. KEEGAN	DUREX-SURTEES TS 19	DUREX TEAM SURTEES	FINA	GOOD	TS 19-07	DFV	
19	V. BRAMBILLA	BETA-SURTEES TS 19	BETA TEAM SURTEES	FINA	GOOD	TS 19-06	DFV	RACE CAR
19T	V. BRAMBILLA	BETA-SURTEES TS 19	BETA TEAM SURTEES	FINA	GOOD	TS 19-02	DFV	
20	J. SCHECKTER	WOLF WR	WALTER WOLF RACING	FINA	GOOD	WR-4	DFV	RACE CAR
20T	J. SCHECKTER	WOLF WR	WALTER WOLF RACING	FINA	GOOD	WR-1	DFV	
22	D. ONGAIS	ENSIGN N177	TEAM TISSOT-ENSIGN	CASTROL	GOOD	N177/MN-07	DFV	
23	L. LEONI	ENSIGN N177	TEAM TISSOT-ENSIGN	CASTROL	GOOD	N177/MN-08	DFV	
24	D. GALICA	HESKETH 308E	HESKETH RACING	-	GOOD	308E-3	DFV	DNQ. DNS.
25	H. REBAQUE	LOTUS-78	TEAM REBAQUE	-	GOOD	78-1	DFV	DNQ. DNS.
26	J. LAFFITE	LIGIER-MATRA	EQUIPE LIGIER GITANES	-	GOOD	JS7-02	Type MS 76/V12	RACE CAR
26T	J. LAFFITE	LIGIER-MATRA	EQUIPE LIGIER GITANES	-	GOOD	JS7-03	Type MS 76/V12	
27	A. JONES	SAUDIA-WILLIAMS FW06	WILLIAMS GRAND PRIX ENGINEERING	SHELL	GOOD	FW-06/1	DFV	
30	B. LUNGER	McLAREN M23	BS FABRICATIONS	-	GOOD	M23/11	DFV	
32	E. CHEEVER	THEODORE TR1	THEODORE RACING	-	GOOD	TR1-1	DFV	DNQ. DNS.
37	A. MERZARIO	MERZARIO A1	TEAM MERZARIO	-	GOOD	A1-01	DFV	

RESULTS

POS. NO.	DRIVER	CAR	LAPS	TIME	SPEED	BRAKES	DAMPERS	GEARBOX	PLUGS	INJECTION	ELECS
1	5 M. ANDRETTI	JPS-78	52	1h. 37m. 04.47s.	119.191 mph.	LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	NGK	LUCAS
2	1 N. LAUDA	PARMALAT-BRABHAM-ALFA	52	1h. 37m. 17.68s.		GIRL	FER	KONI	BRABHAM-ALFA	CHAMPION	LUCAS
3	4 P. DEPAILLER	ELF-TYRRELL 008	52	1h. 37m. 18.11s.		LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FGA 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS
4	7 J. HUNT	MARLBORO-McLAREN M26	52	1h. 37m. 20.52s.		LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FGA 400/6	CHAMPION	LUCAS
5	6 R. PETERSON	JPS-78	52	1h. 38m. 19.32s.		LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	NGK	LUCAS
6	8 P. TAMBAY	MARLBORO-McLAREN M26	52	1h. 38m. 24.37s.		LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FG 400/6	CHAMPION	LUCAS
7	11 C. REUTEMANN	FERRARI 312 T2	52	1h. 38m. 27.07s.		LOCK	FER	KONI	FERRARI 312 TRANS.	CHAMPION	LUCAS
8	12 G. VILLENEUVE	FERRARI 312 T2	52	1h. 38m. 43.35s.		LOCK	FER	KONI	FERRARI 312 TRANS.	CHAMPION	LUCAS
9	14 E. FITTIPALDI	COPIERSUCAR-FITTIPALDI F5A	52	1h. 38m. 45.07s.		LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS
10	20 J. SCHECKTER	WOLF WR	52	1h. 38m. 47.97s.		LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS
11	9 J. MASS	ATS HS-1	52	1h. 38m. 53.54s.		LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FGA 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS
12	10 J.-P. JARIER	ATS HS-1	51			LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FGA 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS
13	30 B. LUNGER	McLAREN M23	51			LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FG 400/6	CHAMPION	LUCAS
14	3 D. PIRONI	ELF-TYRRELL 008	51			LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FGA 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS
15	17 C. REGAZZONI	SHADOW-FORD DNB	51			LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS
16	26 J. LAFFITE	LIGIER-MATRA	50	NOT RUNNING AT FINISH.		LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FL 200	CHAMPION	LUCAS
17	16 H. STUCK	SHADOW-FORD DNB	50			LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS
18	19 V. BRAMBILLA	BETA-SURTEES TS 19	50			LOCK	FER	KONI	HEW FGA 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS

RETIREMENTS

NO	DRIVER	LAPS	REASON
18	R. KEEGAN	4	ENGINE OVERHEATING.
37	A. MERZARIO	9	DIFFERENTIAL.
23	L. LEONI	28	ENGINE.
22	D. ONGAIS	35	BROKEN DISTRIBUTOR ROTOR ARM.
27	A. JONES	36	FUEL VAPOUR LOCK.
2	J. WATSON	41	ENGINE.
26	J. LAFFITE	50	ENGINE.

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS	POINTS	MANUFACTURERS	POINTS
M. ANDRETTI	9	JPS-FORD	9
N. LAUDA	6	BRABHAM-ALFA	6
P. DEPAILLER	4	TYRRELL-FORD	4
J. HUNT	3	McLAREN-FORD	3
R. PETERSON	2		
P. TAMBAY	1		

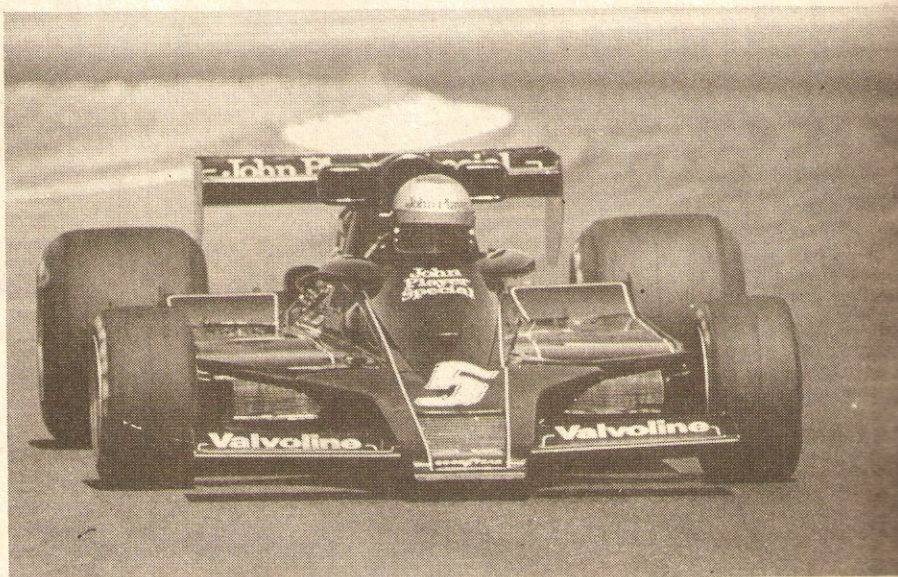
RACE DATA
BY
ALAN
PHILLIPS

11 C. REUTEMANN lm. 47.84 s.		5 F. LANDRETTI lm. 47.75 s.	
2 J. WATSON lm. 48.42 s.		6 R. PETERSON lm. 48.39 s.	
7 J. HUNT lm. 48.72 s.		1 N. LAUDA lm. 48.70 s.	
26 J. LAFFITE lm. 49.13 s.		12 G. VILLENEUVE lm. 48.97 s.	
4 P. DEFAILLER lm. 49.69 s.		8 P. TAMBAY lm. 49.47 s.	
19 V. BRAMBILLA lm. 49.91 s.		10 J.-P. JARIER lm. 49.77 s.	
27 A. JONES lm. 50.11 s.		9 J. MASS lm. 50.06 s.	
17 C. REGAZZONI lm. 50.45 s.		20 J. SCHECKTER lm. 50.35 s.	
16 H. STUCK lm. 51.16 s.		14 E. FITTIPALDI lm. 50.82 s.	
37 A. MERZARIO lm. 51.68 s.		18 R. KEEGAN lm. 51.42 s.	
23 L. LEONI lm. 51.94 s.		22 D. ONGAIS lm. 51.71 s.	
30 B. LUNGER lm. 52.27 s.		3 D. PIRONI lm. 51.99 s.	

AUTOSPORT

* FLAG FELL AT 52 LAPS AND OFFICIAL RESULTS DECLARED AT THAT RACE DISTANCE.

LAP CHART BY COURTESY OF MICHELLE DUBOSC





Stig's Stratos

Saab decided finally last Friday that they will not be taking their new turbo out on the Swedish Rally, as it is just not ready. Along with this, however, comes some even more surprising news—Stig Blomqvist (above) will be doing the rally in a works Lancia Stratos.

At first it may seem very strange for a regular Saab-contracted driver to jump into one of these Italian models, but Saab are the Scandinavian agents for Lancia. So when it was clear that they were not going to enter the Turbo on the rally the Swedish marketing division for Lancia came up with the Stratos idea.

The car will be run and serviced by the works team and be wearing the new Pirelli/Lancia colour scheme. Stig set off to Turin earlier this week to pick up a Lancia recce car and his rally car will be brought along with the Fiat Abarth 131s that Markku Alen, Timo Salonen and Simo Lampinen will be running in the new Alitalia/Fiat colours.

This does not mean, however, that the Turbo development programme is being shelved. On the contrary, Saab are still working hard on the cars which from previous tests show great potential.

Saab will still be entering one car in the Swedish Rally and that will be a Group 2 8-valve 99 for Per Eklund (the same as the car he is using for this year's Swedish national championship).

Pirelli for Lancia

In the new Lancia Fiat combine there has been a bit of a switch round in sponsorship and for 1973 Alitalia will be officially backing Fiat while Pirelli will be the major sponsors for Lancia.

As well as backing Lancia, Pirelli are also producing a new tyre, which they expect to be as important as the P7, which Lancia have used for the past four years. The new tyre is a radial and could well be the prototype of a new Formula 1 tyre it is expected they will bring out for next season.

The new tyres and the cars in their new colours are being officially presented to the press today in Rome just prior to the start of the Monte Carlo Rally.

● Alfa Romeo will be running some Group 2 Alfettas in Italian and European rallies in 1978 under the Jolly Club banner. These cars will be driven by Mauro Pregliasco and 'Lucky' and chasing the ladies part of the Italian championship in one of these cars will be Ippolita Rabusin.

World battle starts in Monte

Bacchelli in a Stratos and Nicolas in a Porsche—3 works Citroens

Barely has the dust settled down after Corsica and the snow after the RAC than the World Championship contenders are back on the trail for the 1978 series. It all starts again on Saturday when over 200 competitors set off from various places around Europe for the Monte Carlo Rally.

This event has always had a certain magic about it—with names like the Torino conjuring up pictures of thousands of enthusiastic fans burning bonfires in the snow and chanting words of encouragement to their native drivers.

If all goes well, this year's Monte should be no disappointment as, apart from the Ford line-up, there is just about every top rally name in the world taking part in some interesting machinery. For instance Fulvio Bacchelli will be out in a Lancia Stratos, Jean-Pierre Nicolas in a Porsche Carrera (could this be the ex-Rohrl model?) and Michele Mouton in a Stratos. Other interesting

names not included in the top 30 are Jochi Kleint in a works VW Golf, Jürgen Barth in a 1600 Toyota, three works Citroën CX2200 diesels for the French girls Marianne Hoepfner, Christine Dacremont (hopefully she has fully recovered from her marathon accident) and Finland's Marketta Oksala.

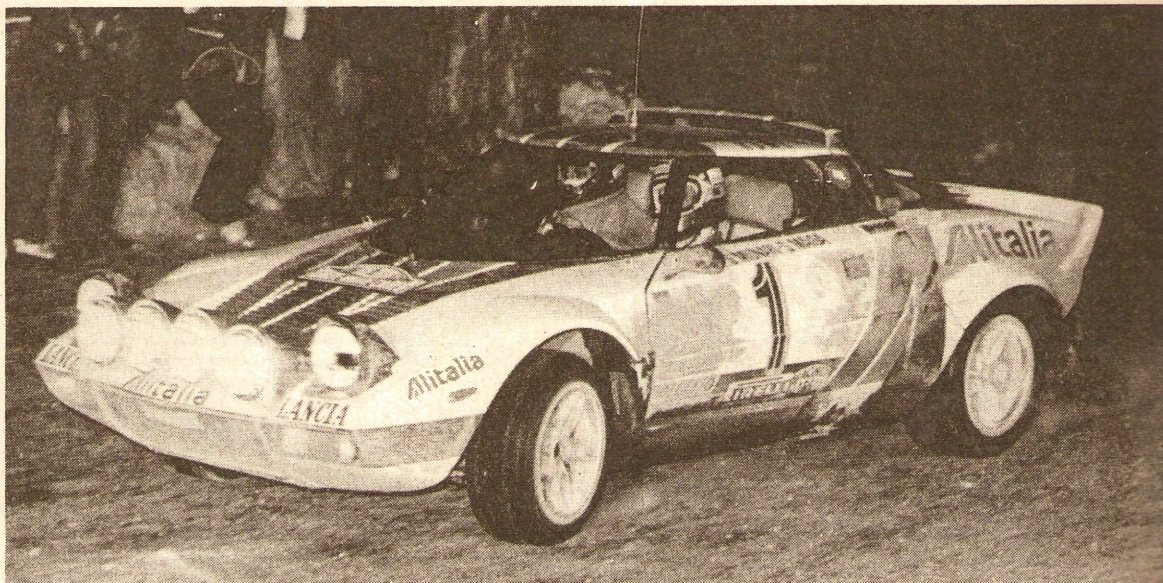
The obvious potential winner must be Sandro Munari, who has won the event no less than four times in 1972, 1975, 1976 and 1977, but another past winner who is in top form at the moment is Jean-Claude Andruet.

The *Coupe des Dames* award in the past two years has been won by Michele Mouton (1976) and Christine Dacremont (1977), so here again there could be a close fight. But we must remember that Christine had a bad accident on the London-Sydney Marathon and this year Michele is in a Chardonnet-entered Lancia.

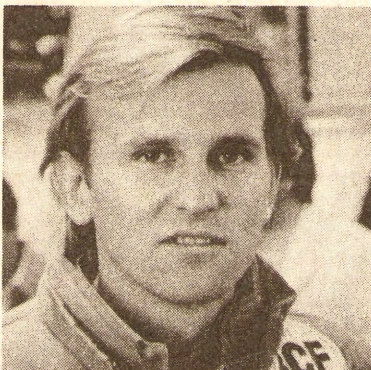
There are a total of eight starting

points for the rally with, not unnaturally, the official Fiat and Lancia teams choosing Rome. Other starting points are Copenhagen, Warsaw, Paris (being used by Andruet, Haldi, Mouton, Frequelin, Beguin, Vincent, Ragnotti, Saby and Clarr), Frankfurt (Kullang, Warmbold, Fritzinger and Carlsson), Monte Carlo (Nicolas, Lunel, Rouget and Swaton), Almeria (Servia) and Lisbon.

The rally proper starts at Gap on Monday and the finish is back in Monte Carlo on Friday. No matter what the weather is like, either hard packed ice and snow or relatively dry roads, this is going to be a very interesting rally and one which could come up with a few surprises. Although Munari must start off as favourite, one never knows just what sort of performance Bacchelli could put up in a Stratos, or how well the likeable and versatile Nicolas will go in the Porsche.



Can Sandro Munari make history by winning the Monte four times in a row?



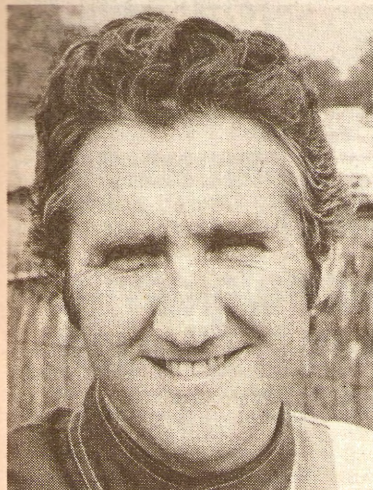
Bacchelli (above) will start the new season in a Stratos while Nicolas (below) will have a Porsche.



The Top 30

- 1, Sandro Munari/Piero SodanoLancia Stratos
- 2, Walter Rohrl/Christian GeisdorferFiat 131 Abarth
- 3, Jean-Pierre Nicolas/Jean TodtPorsche Carrera
- 4, Jean-Claude Andruet/'Biche'Fiat 131 Abarth
- 5, Fulvio Bacchelli/Arnaldo BernacchiniLancia Stratos
- 6, Maurizio Verini/Francesco RossettiFiat 131 Abarth
- 7, Anders Kullang/Bruno BerglundOpel Kadett GT/E
- 8, Bernard Darniche/Alain MaheFiat 131 Abarth
- 9, Claude Haldi/Bernard SandozPorsche Turbo
- 10, Michele Mouton/Francoise ConconiLancia Stratos
- 11, Salvador Servia/Alex BrustengaFiat 131 Abarth
- 12, Guy Frequelin/Jacques DelavalRenault 5 Alpine
- 14, Achim Warmbold/Hanno MenneOpel Kadett GT/E
- 15, Kurt Fritzinger/Willy Peter PitzToyota Corolla
- 16, Bernard Beguin/Willy HuretPorsche Carrera
- 17, Francis Vincent/TBNPorsche Carrera
- 18, Lars Carlson/Bob de JongOpel Kadett GT/E
- 19, Jean Ragnotti/Jean-Marc AndrieRenault 5 Alpine
- 20, Federico Ormezzano/'Rudy'Opel Kadett GT/E
- 21, 'Leo'/Gabriel AlbinoPorsche Turbo
- 22, Christian Lunel/Bernard RostandPorsche Carrera
- 23, Bruno Saby/Michel GueganAutobianchi
- 24, Jerzy Landsberg/Marek MuszynskiOpel Kadett GT/E
- 25, Nicolas Koob/R. HeiderscheidPorsche Carrera
- 26, Jean Pierre Rouget/D. DelaunayPorsche Carrera
- 27, Gerard Swaton/B. CordessePorsche Carrera
- 28, Pierre Pagani/Xavier CarlottiAutobianchi
- 29, Jean Louis Clarr/Jean Francois FauchilleOpel Kadett GT/E
- 30, Aly Kridel/Paul DunkelFord Escort

Culch goes to DOT



Culcheth to drive Manta and Kadett.

Some of the most cheery news to come out of the rally world this week is that Brian Culcheth will be very much in evidence next year as he has just signed a contract with Dealer Opel Team to drive for them in this country. Since John Handley and Brian Gillibrand took over the running of DOT at Tong Park there has been much speculation as to what they will be doing and it

seems that the news we carried several weeks back about rallying a Manta and a Kadett is accurate.

Brian will start the season off contesting the Castrol/AUTOSPORT series in a Group 5 2-litre 16-valve Opel Kadett GT/E and the Sedan Products Open series in a Group 1 Kadett.

But in April the most interesting development will start as Brian changes his Group 5 Kadett for a prototype Manta. This Manta will be running with the 2-litre 16-valve engine and will be the first of its kind to be rallied in Europe. Obviously Opel are placing a great deal of importance on this car as a press release giving their plans referred to the Manta as a 'key factor in Opel's motor sport future'.

Not surprisingly Brian is over the moon at the prospect, as for him it is a great challenge after driving solely British Leyland products for the past ten years and never having rallied an Opel. Brian, in the past, has also excelled as a promotional man for Leyland, and Opel will be putting his talents in this area to good use by assigning him the job of organising all their forums and handling promotions for DOT.

With him on the Open series and northern events will be his regular co-driver, Johnstone Syer, but on the more southerly rallies he will be partnered by Neil Wilson.

Colin calls it a day

In every winning rally car, the efforts of both the driver and co-driver get the car to the finish and victory. Often, however, the role played by the co-driver is forgotten—in fact co-drivers have often been referred to as sacks of potatoes. But there is one co-driver who can never be called that, as he must be one of the most experienced men in the job and that is Colin Francis. So the news this week that Colin is going to retire is not only sad for his driver, Pentti Airikkala, but for rallying in general.

Colin has not had an active role in rallying since his accident at the end of July when he hurt his back badly on the Calderford Trophy Rally. He spent many months in plaster but, at the beginning of this year, was hopeful that his back had mended and that he would be able to be alongside Pentti again. But last week when doing some home decorating he gave his back a bad jolt and decided that he should not really risk competing again and damaging his back on a rally. This was a very hard decision for Colin to make as he has been co-driving since 1960—quite a long time in anyone's terms.

He is one of the rare breed of co-drivers who can be depended on completely by his driver to always make the right decision at the right time. Many of his fellow co-drivers would say that this comes from having one's roots firmly in road rallying. He has always done both stage and road events and, in fact, it was a road event on which he hurt his back.

His early rally career was spent mostly round the Midlands as he moved his job several times in that area. In 1968 he teamed up with Frank Pierson, a partnership that was to last until 1974 and in that time they competed in various cars including a Vauxhall in 1972 when Vauxhall did road rallying for the last time. Then in 1975 and 1976 he rallied with Chrysler and Skoda (for whom he did all the internationals). Then in 1977 he teamed up with Pentti in the Chevette and, being Welsh, one of the proudest moments of his career



Francis—an experienced co-driver.

must have been when they gave the Chevette its first international win on the Welsh.

Colin has always done the top road events and fitted stage events in whenever possible. He is one of the sport's friendliest and most likeable characters and, even though it seems unlikely that he will be seen in the co-drivers seat again, hopefully he will not be missing from the scene as there must be many teams who could find his talents useful.

Galway news

Another entry for the Galway International Rally has come from Chrysler for Bernard Unett in a 1600 Sunbeam. This event should suit Bernard very well as he really does feel at home on tarmac. He will be co-driven on this occasion by Peter Scott. Other recent entries have been received from Demi Fitzgerald (2-litre Escort), Brigid Clarke (Polski Fiat 125p) and Noel Smith has said he hopes to be out in his Porsche. Entries close tomorrow (Friday) and anyone interested should ring Brian Thornton on Galway 7853.



Pentti took his Manx winning car out for the last time on the RAC.

Chris buys a winner

The Chevette is rapidly becoming a very popular rally car in this country having proved itself to be a winner in the hands of Pentti Airikkala during 1977, so it is no surprise to hear that staunch Vauxhall supporter Chris Lord will be driving one next year.

Chris originally had a new one on order from DTV for this year but, due to supply problems, it seemed very unlikely that it would be ready in time for the Mintex—the first event he has planned on his busy calendar. Therefore, when Pentti's ex-RAC car came up for sale, buying this seemed to be the logical conclusion.

At the moment the car is still in LHD form and Chris was going to Shepreth yesterday to test it and see whether he could manage it or whether it would be wiser to change it to RHD. There will be no problem doing this as he has someone ready to complete the job and DTV are prepared to swap him RHD bits for the LHD ones on the car.

Chris's comment on the deal was: "I think the car has been tested and tried and I feel very happy about it. Part of the deal is that the car will be supplied just how it finished the RAC with all the original bits on it—even a tow rope and a rubber torch in the pocket."

The only major change to the car will be the engine. Chris said that it would be just too expensive to purchase a new one and anyway the one that he has used in his Group 4 Magnum is perfect. The last time he tested this twin-cam unit it produced 240bhp at 7,000 revs, which is the same as the works cars so he sees no reason to change it.

The events Chris has planned for '78 are all the rounds of the Esso/BTRDA



Lord—from Magnum to Chevette.

championship and he feels very confident that he can win the series. He is also doing his local international, the Mintex, the RAC and at least one event in Italy (this will most probably be the San Martino, an ECR round). As the season progresses, if he finds he is doing well in the BTRDA series he also hopes to fit in some Castrol/AUTOSPORT rounds, such as the Castrol '78.

The famous El Gam name will still be painted on the side of the car, he has a Goodyear contract for the season and will be taking Ron Varley along with him as co-driver. Chris is full of great hopes for '78 after not too good a time in '77 of which he announced, "I had a bloody awful year."

Sedan extra awards

In addition to awards already announced for the Sedan Products Open championship, the firm have now come up with two more. One is for ladies and the award, probably a salver, will be given to the lady driver or co-driver who gets the most points during the season.

The other award is slightly more complex and certainly 'different'. To quote the press release: "The exercise will consist of seven individual competitions, one for each rally commencing with the Mintex. The idea is that the total list of entries will be divided in half

and then teams will be paired off on a random basis, rather like the FA Cup draw. A set time will be decided by Sedan before the event and the two teams whose combined finishing time equals—or comes closest to—the set time will be the winners.

"The thinking behind this random type of competition is that the private entrant with limited resources stands the same chance of seeing some reward for his efforts as the works team. The prize, which will be awarded at the end of each rally, will consist of sets of four Sedan gauges in a tailor made podule."



Piggy—Chevette and Porsche plans.

Piggy's plans

Another full works spec Chevette will be out on the Open Series this year in the hands of 'Piggy' Thompson, who has bought all the pieces plus the engine from DTV and is having it built by Ian Jemmison in York. Although 'Piggy' was hoping to debut it on the Mintex it now seems unlikely that it will be ready in time, so he will most likely be out for the first time on his own local event, the Raylor.

He has always been a person who thoroughly enjoys his rallying and this year he says for him is basically going to be a fun year. With Ian as his co-driver he hopes to also go over to Ireland to sample the rallying and the Guinness.

The Chevette is not the only car he is planning to rally this year, however, as he has visited the Porsche factory in Stuttgart. If all goes well and Porsche bring their cars back from the Safari in a reasonable condition he has done a deal with them to buy one.



Lines—carrying on with TR7s.

Del's TR7s

Even though what the factory TR7s are doing next year is still a mystery, at least Del Lines has sorted out a programme for his similar cars. Del's plans revolve around two cars, his original one in Century Oils livery and another that he has bought from Endrust, which was rallied by David Hardcastle.

In fact, one of the cars has now been bought by Ian Giles of Minibits of Weston Super Mare for his own use. This car will be prepared and run by Del for Ian to rally in the Pirelli/CCC Championship with Del's foreman, Charlie Gardener, as co-driver.

The other car, Del is going to keep in its Century Oils colours even though they are not supporting any rallying this year. "This is a gesture to them to thank them for their help and make up for some of last year's disappointments", Del explained. Del himself will be doing odd rallies in it as will Jenny Birrell (who will definitely do the Burmah for him) and Willie Rutherford.

David's Wicklow win

In the Wicklow area on Saturday, the Holfeld Pump rally '78 was run in ideal weather conditions and victory went to Northern Ireland's David Francis (right) (RS2000) by over two minutes from Joe McHale in a Mk1 1300 Escort.

Top seed Ronnie McCartney broke a drive shaft on his Mk1 Escort on the first stage and unfortunately went OTL as his crew could not locate a new one in time. They did, however, manage to find one a bit later and Ronnie rejoined the competitors and set fastest times, often by ten to 15 seconds, on all the remaining stages.

Another top name destined for quite a bad time was Will Sparrow in a Holfeld-sponsored Mini Cooper 'S'. He was running first on the road and soon became a favourite with the spectators for his spectacular handling of the car. Unfortunately his good run came to a sudden halt when he hit a huge forestry department road roller on stage 9 while he was drifting sideways through a very long open righthander. The Mini was damaged on the co-drivers side and the rear and fortunately a long service halt after the stage gave his crew time to do some repairs. But this was all to no avail as on the next stage the Mini broke the flange on the diff case that holds the drive shaft into the diff and he limped to the end of the stage and retired. This was a sad end to a good drive as, at the time of the accident, he was lying fourth overall and had only dropped down to ninth after the service halt.

Also having problems on the event was Freddie Paterson who went off the road on stages five, ten and 13 and finished with a very bent motor car. Another very welcome face on the event was that of Rosemary Smith who drove a Volkswagen Beetle Group 5 car as course car.

The rally had a total of 53 starters and 36 finishers with John Scallion winning Group 1 in his RS2000.



1. D. Francis/W. J. Carse (RS2000), 86mins 18secs penalties;
2. J. McHale/H. McHale (Escort 1300), 82.28;
3. D. Yeates/F. O'Donoghue (Fiat 131 1800), 90.23;
4. J. Scallion/R. Morgan (RS2000), 90.26;
5. B. Fagan/B. Fagan (RS2000), 91.28;
6. G. Robinson/L. Fannin (Chrysler Avenger), 91.56;
7. R. Mitchell/E. Harris (Escort TC), 93.31;
8. E. Kenmore/J. Armstrong (Opel Kadett GT/E), 94.51;
9. D. McCauley/C. Gallacher (BMW Alpina), 94.54;
10. F. Leneham/M. O'Reilly (Mini), 95.49.

David Francis took his Mk I Escort to a rather surprising win on the Holfeld Rally.



Mopar goes rallying

After several years in racing, backing the Group 1 campaign of Bernard Unett, rumour has it that Mopar are now moving into rallying with a championship for Chrysler drivers within four of our leading series.

It seems that it will be known as the Team Mopar Rally Championship and any competitor in a Chrysler vehicle will be eligible to enter. The championships involved will be the Sedan Products Open, the Castrol/AUTOSPORT, the Esso/BTRDA and selected rounds of The Scotsman.

This will be quite a lucrative championship for those taking part as they

will be able to count their best ten scores at the end of the season and Mopar will be putting up a total of £1,000. Two men particularly interested in this should be James Haselgrave and Alastair Roy who, with dealer support, will be running Sunbeams next year.

Ivor Clark will also be in a Chrysler for the season and is using Will Sparrow's old car until his new vehicle is ready. However, Ivor will be starting off the season in a Vauxhall on the Snowman—this being his prize for doing so well in the 1977 Scotsman/Glaxo series—and for this drive he will have Castrol's rallyman Ian Parry sitting beside him.

Did you know?

It is quite surprising just how interesting statistics can be and an article in the French magazine *L'Automobile* by Christian Moity highlighted just this. He did a survey of the World Championship rallies held between 1970 and 1977 and came up with some interesting facts and figures.

As regards the drivers, Bjorn Waldegaard came out on top with nine victories and close behind him with eight was Sandro Munari. The Frenchman Jean-Luc Therier was next with six and Stig Blomqvist and Ove Andersson were both on five. There are three men with four victories, Bernard Darniche, Hannu Mikkola and Timo Makinen and two with three, Jean-Claude Andruet and Markku Alen. Obviously as we go further down the list there are more names, so with two victories each are Roger Clark, Edgar Herrman, Joginder Singh, Harry Kallstrom and Jean-Pierre Nicolas and with one each Fulvio Bacchelli, Amilcare Ballestrieri, Sergio Barbasio, William Boyce, Jean Deschazeaux, Per Eklund, Kyosti Hamalainen, Gene Henderson, Simo Lampinen, Aakan Lindberg, Shekar Mehta, Rafaele Pinto, Walter Rohrl, Timo Salonen and Achim Warmbold.

Unfortunately, one fact comes out of this and that is that British drivers have not fared too well—Roger Clark being our only salvation. But the Swedes have done well with 23 victories with the French second with 16, the Finns third with 14 and the Italians next with 12.

One piece of information that is not at all surprising is that the most successful rally cars was the Lancia Stratos with 16 wins and next came the Alpine (13), Ford (12), Fiat (11), Saab (6), etc.

Briefly . . .

● With the sad retirement from rallying of Colin Francis, this leaves Pentti Airikkala with a spare seat beside him for this season. Although no one has been signed up for the whole Open series, Mike Nicholson will be doing the Mintex with Pentti and after that will see how they get on.

● Soon to be seen on stage rallies in the Midlands and Wales will be a Triumph Dolomite Sprint in the hands of Mike 'Funky' Gibbon and Martin Bowcott. This will replace the black Escort that the Worcester based crew campaigned with last year. They have sponsorship for this project from SU Butec, A-Z Office Equipment (Worcester) and Autoparts (Malvern) and also mechanical aid from their local garage Larkhill Service Station.

● Having finished second in Class I (G1 up to 1600cc) in the Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship 1977, Richard Phillips who usually co-drives with Jim Llewellyn is seeking a competent driver with a reliable car to contest the championship again this year in addition to the Welsh Association's Stage Championship and selected Home Internationals. Richard is prepared to travel and share the usual expenses and can be contacted on Haverfordwest 4476.

● Paul Ridgeway will be organising a rally forum for Rugby MC on Friday, February 3 at the Eurocrest Hotel, Coventry (500 yards off Junction 2 of the M6). The forum, chaired by Dunlop's John Horton, will include Russell Brookes, John Taylor, Peter Bryant and Peter Newton. On the evening's entertainment will also be the showing of three films and admission is 50p. Anyone wanting any more information should contact Paul on Rugby 72356.

● Regulations are now available for the Western Mail/Phonepower Wales Welsh Rally from Carey Edwards, 45 Alt-yr-yn Close, Newport, Gwent, NPT 5EE, Tel: Newport 62815. Entry fees are £95 up to March 31 for private entrants and £115 for sponsored entrants and after that up to April 17 are £105 and £125.

● There will be a 'Parkinson' type rally evening held by Lowland Tyres of Dundee Street, Edinburgh in the Royal Scott Hotel, Glasgow Road, Edinburgh on Thursday, February 2 in aid of the BEN charity. An entertaining evening (from 7.30 to midnight) is promised with Dunlop's John Horton extracting all sorts of secrets from Russell Brookes, John Brown, Ronnie McCartney and Andrew Cowan. There will also be several films on the agenda, a bar extension and tickets will be £1 each.

Castrol Autosport NATIONAL RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 1978 RAC

Are you ready?

With just three weeks to go before the first round of the 1978 Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship all the signs are that it could turn out to be a vintage year for the series. Not only are many people bringing along new cars for the series, such as the Mazdas and the Opel Manta, but many familiar faces will be seen again hoping to make it their year for winning.

The response that Ian Parry at Castrol has had from prospective competitors has been overwhelming—at the beginning of the week the number of drivers who had registered was rapidly approaching 400. Although Ian is getting more and more every day he still is rather worried that some of the top names have overlooked the fact that the closing date for registration is February 11, so there is not any time to waste.

Now that the ten rounds look to be very much sorted as far as routes etc are concerned the only real problem would seem to be the three events that are covered by only four weeks in April. This is not a desirable situation, but one which unfortunately cannot be helped and hopefully any problems competitors have on the events are not going to jeopardise their chances in the next rounds.

Castrol are very much aware of this problem but hope that neither the Raylor nor Granite City Rallies will suffer because of problems on the Cheltenham National.

The first event to look to is the Gwynedd and the organisers, the Caernarvonshire and Anglesey MC, hope that competitors who are still in negotiation do not forget the importance of getting their entries in on time, as all the signs are that they, along with all the other championship counters, are going to be heavily oversubscribed. For this event the seasoned campaigners such as David Stokes and Geoff Simpson have learnt how important it is to get in early, so their Escorts have entries, as does George Hill's Chevette and Willie Rutherford's 2.6 Mazda. The closing date is January 23, with late entries considered up to January 30.

One set of people, however, who have got the season off with a good start are the Mazda Hatchback Challengers, over 20 having entered so far. On the subject of this new category, since it was first announced Mazda have had over 120 serious enquiries and had no problems in placing the 25 cars.

The drivers in this challenge represent an interesting cross section of people. There are newcomers to the sport, very experienced drivers as can be seen by this list of the drivers: Fred Almond, Peter Doughty, Graham Denton, Deryck Pickup, Richard Tilley, Colin Garrell, Redmond Barry, Bryan Thomas, Ted Collins, Mike Vizor, Geoff Stewart, Chris Baty, Glen Mitton, Jon Lloyd, John Wilson, David Brisker, Gethin Jones, John Davies, Jim Ranson, Geoff Fielding, Martin Watson, John Hemsley, Rodney Badham and Paul Appleby. These men come from all parts of the country including Portsmouth, Perth, Bridgend, Ayr, Brighton, Halifax and Birmingham. Some have even had some racing experience and others just proved very good on the smaller club events.

Your Season

Date	Rally	Status	Organising club
February 11	Gwynedd	N	Caernarvonshire & Anglesey MC
March 31/	Castrol Cheltenham		
April 1	National	N	Cheltenham MC
April 8	Raylor Rally	N	York MC
April 22	C P Granite City	N	Aberdeen & DMC
July 1/2	Jim Clark Memorial Rally	N	Northumbrian MC
August 26/27	Peter Russek Manuals Rally	N	Port Talbot MC
September 1/2	Belfast Telegraph Ulster Rally 1978	N	Mid Antrim, North Ulster Larne MCs
September 30	Europa Lodge Lindisfarne Rally	N	Tynemouth & DMC
October 14	Castrol '78	N	Wolverhampton & South Staffs CC
November 4	Focol Wydean Stages	N	Forest of Dean MC

If through force majeure any of the above dates are altered, or an event is cancelled, the promoters of the Championship reserve the right to either accept a change of date, substitute nominated events, cancel that particular round, or alter the number of events on which scores will count. Notification of any changes will be given through an official announcement in AUTOSPORT.



As can be seen by the picture above work is going ahead on preparing Willie Rutherford's Group 5 Mazda Hatchback for the Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship.

The 2.6-litre engine which Willie collected himself from Germany was taken straight to Racing Services where Ken Brittain (who previously prepared Dave Brodie's racing engine) set to work on it. The basically standard engine has had some special design changes to the intake and exhaust port shapes plus uprating the oil pressure and baffling the sump.

Along with these changes and careful running-in on the test bed and the use of a Weber 48 1DA carburettor on a fabricated manifold the power output of the engine has risen from the standard 135 bhp to 250 bhp.

Other interesting Group 5 cars on the scene will include Brian Culcheth's Opel Manta. But unfortunately at the moment it looks very unlikely that Toyota will be on the scene again with their powerful little Corolla.

CONTACTS

Ian Parry, Rally Championship Co-ordinator, Castrol Limited, Burmah House, Pipers Way, Swindon, Wilts SN3 1RE. Tel: Swindon 30151 Ext 2533.

David Edelstein, Public Relations Executive, Burmah Castrol Company, Burmah House, Pipers Way, Swindon, Wilts SN3 1RE. Tel: Swindon 30151 Ext 2831.

Rallies Editor, AUTOSPORT, 76 Dean Street, London W1A 1BU. Tel: 01-734 4242.

Chris Belton, RAC Motor Sport Division, 31 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8QH. Tel: 01-235 8601.

Geoff Ward, RAC Eligibility Scrutineer, 12 Fairfield Park Road, Cheltenham, Glos. Tel: Cheltenham 33300 (H), Cheltenham 673136 (W).

Gwynedd Rally—Dafydd Edwards, Lliwedd, 39 Ty Croes, Llanfairpwll, Anglesey, Gwynedd.

Castrol Cheltenham National—Ken Dudley, 19 Carrisbrooke Road, Hucclecote, Gloucester. Tel: Gloucester 66788 (H).

Raylor Rally—Tony Raylor, Aspen House, Stockton on the Forest, York YO3 9UF. Tel: York 400401. Telex: 57836.

CP Granite City—Bob Shearer, 29 Goudin Place, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen. Tel: Aberdeen 703550 (H), Aberdeen 874723 (W).

Jim Clark Memorial Rally—Derek Wood, 29 St Buryan Crescent, Cheviot View Estate, Newcastle. Tel: Newcastle 863348.

Peter Russek Manuals Rally—David Williams, Treetops, 7 Penigaer Road, Llanelli, Dyfed. Tel: Llanelli 4780 (H).

Belfast Telegraph Ulster Rally 1978—Wilbert McIlmoyle, 125 Tamlaght, Rasharkin, Ballymena, Co Antrim. Tel: Rasharkin 397.

Europa Lodge Lindisfarne Rally—Derek Howe, 18 Moor Close, Moor Park Estate, North Shields, Tyne & Wear NE29 8DB. Tel: North Shields 84559 (H), Newcastle 663966 (W).

Castrol '78—Christine Chick, 12 Brooklands Road, Albrighton, Nr Wolverhampton WV7 3DW. Tel: Albrighton 3281.

Focol Wydean Stages—John Thurston, Highbury House, Bream Road, Lydney, Glos. Tel: Lydney 2339 (H).



The co-ordination of the Castrol/AUTOSPORT Rally Championship is once again in the capable hands of Ian Parry, who will be the man to look for on every round for any help and guidance.

Good and bad news has come this week for competitors in the Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship, regarding the date of the Castrol Cheltenham National Rally. First the good news—the date has been moved back a week to March 31/April 1 and so it does not clash with the Circuit of Ireland. Now the bad news—this date change means it is just a week before the Raylor and, along with the Granite City, there will now be three rounds of the championship in four weeks.

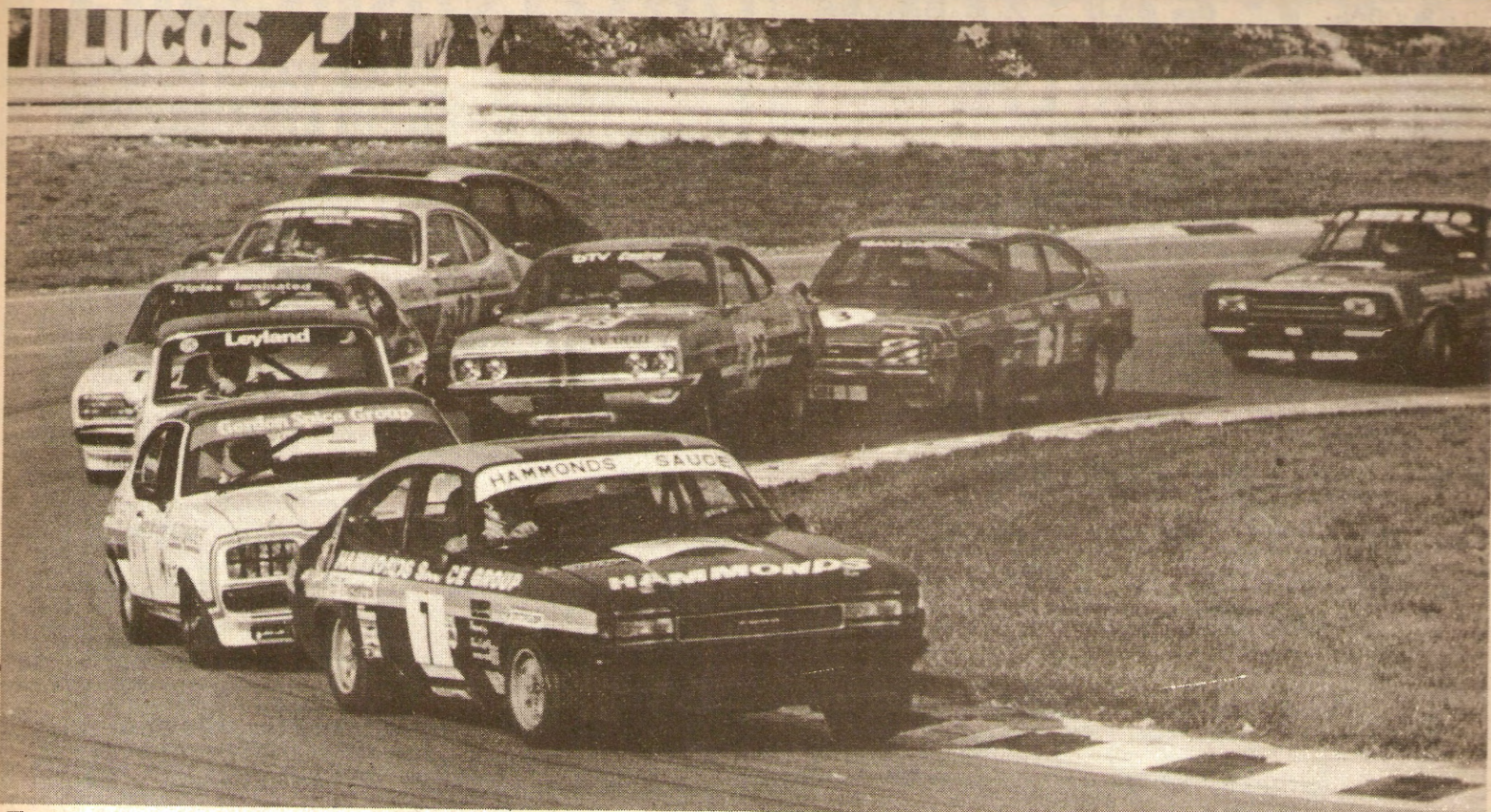
This date change was by no means the fault of the organisers, the Cheltenham MC, as they were told just nine days before Christmas that they could not use the Eppynt Ranges or the surrounding areas as the Army were holding manoeuvres over the Easter weekend. It seems this is indirectly caused by the firemen's strike as, with the men on fire duty stand-by, they have lost many opportunities to use the ranges.

Clerk of the Course, Tony McMahon was faced with a dilemma as this meant the loss of two thirds of his competitive mileage and the weekend of March 31/April 1 was the only one free between then and September. Tony being one of the best organisers in this country just got down to the job of raising the phoenix out of the ashes and offering a rally for that weekend with 150 stage miles. To add to his frustration he then found that the usual rally HQ at Llandrindod Wells was not available, so a new place had to be found.

So the new format he has come up with at incredibly short notice is a rally starting at Llandovery at 11pm on the Friday, with the new HQ at the Castle Hotel. The competitors will then cover 90 stage miles (60 on tarmac) before returning to Llandovery for a breakfast halt on the Saturday. After a two hour halt the competitors will cover a further 60 stage miles and the first car is due at the finish in Hereford at about 2pm.

The prize-giving will take place in Hereford at the Green Dragon Hotel. Tony is very grateful for all the help that Trust Houses Forte, who own the Green Dragon, and the Green Dragon management, have given him. Despite all these problems it looks very much as though Tony and his many enthusiastic helpers will come up with what is usually one of the best organised and friendliest rallies in the British Calendar.

● Contesting the Castrol/AUTOSPORT series in 1978 will be Richard Iliffe partnered by Castrol's Tony Gilhorne in a new MkII RS1800. Richard has been busily building this car for several months and hopes to give it its first outing on the Castrol Cheltenham National Rally. However, Richard is still lacking sponsorship for the project and would be pleased to hear from anyone who can help.



The sort of wheel to wheel action that made 1977 a vintage year for British Group 1. Here, Craft leads Spice (Capris), Dron (Dolomite), Vandervell (Capri) Marshall (Magnum) et al.

Getting better all the time

In 1977, Bernard Unett became British Saloon Car Champion for the third time in four years. His domination is not a reflection of the state of competition in the category as ROBIN BRADFORD reveals in this survey of last season.

The British Touring Car Championship has undergone a number of changes in recent years—not least a change in title to 'Saloon Car Championship' at the request of the 1977 sponsors, Tricentrol—which have made comparison with previous years difficult. When the change to Group 1 format came in 1974, there were many who mourned the passing of the noise and spectacle of the rumbling Camaros and the borders of highly competitive 2-litre Escorts.

But motor racing, we were told, must progress and Group 1, with considerable works support, was with us. But we had not lost the Camaros—they were there in force: Stuart Graham, Richard Lloyd and others forming into neat processions, lapping all before them, but *not* exciting the crowds.

And so, after two years, a 3-litre limit was imposed, effectively banning the Camaros and the occasional other American

interlopers—such as Tony Lanfranchi's Hemi-cuda—and hopefully preventing the runaway wins of '74 and '75. This time, things worked rather better. While the Camaros had been processing round, entrants of such cars as Capris and Dolomites had been working hard on development, Bernard Unett had been winning championships, and, with the first 3-litre year, came closer racing—particularly at the head of the field where the spectator looks.

Last season was, without doubt, the most competitive year since the National series went Group 1, a comment which I suggest will also be true of the forthcoming season. Ford have already announced plans to run a Grand Prix driver in three of the British rounds, and we have heard of even more ambitious plans from other manufacturers that will raise the status of the British Saloon Car Championship as high as it has ever been.

But, back to last year. A programme of 12 rounds covered five circuits—Brands Hatch, Donington, Oulton Park, Silverstone and Thruxton—sadly not including Mallory Park, which had proved very exciting the previous year. It is good to see Mallory back in the list for '78.

A nail-biting wheel-to-wheel race in the opening round at Silverstone in March between the Capris of Gordon Spice and Chris Craft set the tone for the season. There were close matches in all four classes for the first time in four years, the Capris being very evenly matched, Tony Dron's Dolomite battling against class-mates Gerry Marshall and Jeff Allam (Magnums), Class C winner Richard Lloyd (VW Golf) struggling against Brian Pepper's VW and Martin Brundle's Toyota, and even overall champion Bernard Unett (Avenger) fighting really hard for a change against the Mini of Richard Longman.

Sadly the season ended on an almost predictable note of discontent—a squabble over regulations. Caused partly by loose wording by the RAC and compounded by lack of clarification and lax policing during the year, a fight blew up over the points awarded for fastest laps.

The result was that, not for the first time, it was impossible to announce the name of the British Saloon Car Champion after the final round at Brands Hatch in October. This not only cost the manufacturers in financial and promotional terms but it also makes our major RAC national championship—which should and *can* be the most prestigious series in the country—look ridiculous in the eyes of spectators. And that is very sad, particularly as the sheer spectacle of the series has improved so much.

We can but hope that niggling little problems like this can be avoided this year, but the fact that a sponsor for the series has not yet been announced cannot be encouraging for prospective competitors so close to the start of the season. The prospects for this year's championship are very good, with a considerable amount of manufacturer involvement and some truly exciting announcements just around the corner. It would be a pity for all that to be spoiled by inefficient organisation at the top.

2301-3000cc

The senior class (2301-3000cc) was almost exclusively the preserve of the Ford Capri, a popular competition car virtually since its introduction. The Ford Motor Company, experts in the field of homologation, had already created such a competitive car that only one other *marque* bothered even to challenge the Capri in 1977—but they already have yet further tweaks up their collective sleeve for the forthcoming season.

Since the previous year—when Opel Commodore and BMW 3.0Si models had regularly challenged the Capri—Ford's 3-litre V6 hatchback had benefited from a new front spoiler, high ratio steering rack, brake balance bar and a cool air duct from the front of the car direct to the carburettor air cleaner which, from the point of view of power increase was the most significant improvement. An anti-dive kit, introduced largely to prevent the front wheels moving backwards under severe braking—a problem characteristic of the 1976 cars—improved the handling, but the Capri could still do with a rear spoiler to further settle the handling (perhaps coming this year?)

Developing about 225bhp at best, the Capri is slightly more powerful than the Triumph Dolomite Sprint (of which more later) and rather less so than the BMW 530i which was the only model to offer any serious challenge to the Capri's class supremacy.

There were no official works entries in the 1977 series but Ford have been so impressed with their cars' performances that a considerable amount of help will be given to Stuart

Graham, Gordon Spice and Chris Craft for 1978. These three were, without doubt, the leading Capri drivers last year, their evenly matched skills and cars resulting in the sort of wheel to wheel racing, lap after lap, that made last year a vintage year in the British Saloon Car Championship's almost two-decade history.

Spice ran his car under the banner of his large accessory business, the Gordon Spice Group. A Capri campaigner of considerable experience, it was he who finally came out at the front of the top class, with a couple of overall wins to his credit and four class wins—the latter a vital ingredient in a class-structured championship.

His new team-mate for the forthcoming season, Chris Craft, took his Hammonds Sauce Capri to second in class behind Spice. These two had started the season door handle to door handle in a nail-biting opening race at Silverstone (which Craft would almost certainly have won but for gearbox failure three laps from the end) and they finished the season virtually side-by-side at Brands Hatch, Spice beating Craft by just two seconds.

Of the 'top three', Stuart Graham had the least experience with a Capri. When the 3-litre capacity limit was imposed on the British Saloon Car Championship at the start of the 1976 season, Stuart Graham—a previous class-winner with his highly successful Chevrolet Camaros, forsook the G1 scene for a year in Super Saloons and G2, an unsuccessful and very expensive project. Graham managed, however, to keep faith with his eager sponsors, Fabergé, and returned to G1 in 1977 with a typically immaculately prepared Capri. He took rather longer than the rest to get into the groove,

however, and finished the season third equal with Vince Woodman after a couple of impressive race wins.

Woodman, whose ties with Esso through his very successful West Country garage business brought him sponsorship for the season, only had one race win, but his consistency always keeps him in the points. The vivid white, red and blue colour scheme of Esso was seen on two cars at the British Grand Prix meeting when Jonathan Buncombe—Woodman's co-driver in the Spa 24 hours—drove the second car to second in class, reminding us of his innate skills.

Of the other Capris, Colin Vandervell was the most successful, joint fifth in the class with Tom Walkinshaw's BMW, of which more in a moment. Vandervell showed his fighting determination time and again during the year and it is a mark of how competitive the formula was that he did not figure higher in the final results. No one who saw his remarkable recovery from that spin to end all spins at Silverstone's Woodcote corner could doubt that he is still among our leading saloon drivers.

Running under the Samuri Racing Banner, Win Percy, class champion in the team's Toyota Celica the previous year, also transferred to a Capri. The occasionally rather insular Samuri team elected to carry out their own engine preparation and development, a move which probably cost them valuable points. Certainly, they were still struggling mid-season to learn lessons which were common knowledge to others, despite which Percy was still among the quickest when the car showed reliability.

So, on to the only serious challenger to the



Above left: Stuart Graham gets a little out of shape in his efforts to stay ahead of Colin Vandervell's similar Capri. Above right: Gordon Spice, winner of the 3-litre class. Below left: Chris Craft, Spice's major opponent all season. Below right: Tom Walkinshaw with the right-hand-drive BMW 530i which he raced only once in the final round.



Getting better all the time

continued

Capri, the fuel-injected 3-litre BMW 530i of Scot—and ex-Capri driver—Tom Walkinshaw. Tom, who is now working full-time for BMW as their motorsport manager expected the development of this four-door saloon to be fairly slow, and it certainly was. The 530i, although not marketed in this country, is available to special order, features a fuel-injected 3-litre engine and is the smallest car in the BMW stable with a 3-litre lump. It handles well and is very quick around the corners, which compensates (as it needs to) for the weight (about 20 per cent more than a Capri), which keeps straight line speed down. While the handling is excellent in the dry, it is exceptional in the wet, as Walkinshaw proved with his pole position after wet practice at Silverstone.

Walkinshaw worked hard all year to slowly improve the car and, although he never finished higher than third in class, he managed to come fifth equal with Vandervell. Development work is being carried out on the 530i during the winter and BMW have exciting new plans to announce in the very near future.

1601-2300cc

The man who so nearly became British Saloon Car Champion in 1977, Tony Dron, was way ahead of his class—the 1601-2300cc division—from the word go. Since the previous season, the Leyland Dolomite Sprint's homologation had been upped to include ventilated disc brakes, a vital improvement since 'Dollies' tended to 'cook' their brakes in the fairly long races required by the championship. The new brakes, although a considerable improvement, did not entirely cure the problem but the homologation package also included bigger carburettors and a close ratio gearbox, the latter removing the need for what had often been a troublesome overdrive.

Tony Dron, certainly the tallest G1 driver, should also be given the accolade of the bravest last year. His determination to win the championship was never more patent than in August when, after a horrifying testing accident mid-week at Donington Park in which he nearly broke his right foot, he raced the following Sunday. Well, he didn't just race—he won by 3secs after one of the best G1 races of the season and established a new lap record, all this despite suffering intense pain from his injury virtually throughout the race.

Dron's performance last year, after which he finished just one point behind Bernard Unett's Chrysler Avenger, included five outright wins—and remember that is against the severe opposition of the larger-engined 3-litre Capris—and ten class wins, a record not equalled even by Unett.

When there was a challenge for the class, it came from the Vauxhall Magnum, of which the two most competitive were the Castrol/Dealer Team Vauxhall car of 'Mr Club Racing', Gerry Marshall and the BP/Allam Motors car of young Jeff Allam.

The bulk of DTV's competition effort during 1977 went into the development of the Chevette 2300HS for rallying. From its debut in the '76 RAC Rally to its narrow defeat in the Motor/ RAC Rally Championship was little more than 12 months and the effort expended at Shepreth by Bill Blydenstein and his eager bunch of workers resulted in less time—and probably less budget—being available for the racing cars. And, as has already been announced, the DTV are racing nothing at all in the coming season.



Ever a fighter, Gerry Marshall drove hard and well, often to be sidelined with mechanical problems. His sideways style was, as ever, popular with crowds.



Above: Tony Dron—nearly champion.

Below: Richard Scott—winning Golf.



So, with only a couple of races in his super saloon "Baby Bertha" and a none-too-successful G1 season, Gerry Marshall had a rather lean year. He finished third in class, just a couple of points behind Jeff Allam, who had been one of the leading lights of production saloon racing the previous year. Allam, who is one of the youngest G1 drivers, drove with great maturity all season, winning the class on two occasions and he must be looked at as one of our most promising young drivers—what a pity that the Grovewood Awards nearly always seem to go to single-seater drivers.

Magnums were also driven by Holman Blackburn and Gordon Bruce—who pulled out mid-season when he left *Motor* to work for Ford whom, one assumes, wouldn't have been too keen on his racing a Vauxhall—while the only other car of note in the class was the Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTAm. This 2-litre, American spec coupé, while being one of the most attractive G1 cars, was not a serious threat to the class opposition. After the fuel injection used at the start of the season proved ineffective, the team adopted carburettors, which did improve the power, but even better carburation and an improved exhaust system are needed to bring about any marked progress. While the car, driven by Jon Dooley, was a long way behind the Dolly, the team did improve their deficit on the leaders by more than half during the year.

1301-1600cc

Support for the 1600cc class in the previous few seasons had been poor, to say the least. Runaway victories—particularly in 1976 for Win Percy's Toyota Celica—had been commonplace but, for 1977, the picture changed. Suddenly, people wanted to be involved in the 1600 class and more new cars were to be found there than anywhere else.

And it was one of these new models which won the class and finished third overall in the championship—the Volkswagen Golf GTI of Richard Lloyd. The Londoner arrived at the opening round of the series with his, at that stage, unsponsored silver Golf, which he had originally bought as a road car before realising

Getting better all the time

continued

its immense competition potential. The water-cooled fuel-injected 1600cc engine is very tough and well-built and, apart from a 'slightly demon road cam', very little has been done. With works encouragement, although not direct support, Lloyd won his class seven times during the year, more than doubling his closest rival's score by the end of the season.

Inspired by Lloyd's choice of car, Brian Pepper—like Stuart Graham, a former Camaro ace—selected the other fuel-injected baby VW, the Scirocco GTI, in which he appeared a little after the start of the season. With some support from Access Equipment, Pepper finished third in the class, sandwiching the Alfa Romeo Alfetta 1.6GT of Peter Hilliard. Both Pepper and Hilliard scored two class wins, the only other class winner being young Martin Brundle.

A former kartist, Brundle was driving the ex-Barrie Williams Toyota Celica (entered in 1976 by Samuri Racing) which Martin's father, John, was preparing and sponsoring from his Toyota dealership in Norfolk. As soon as the family had acquired the car at the end of last season, Martin started racing it in special saloon races to gain circuit experience and licence signatures as the 1977 season was his first ever full season of circuit racing. He drove impressively and quickly, if rather erratically, and he is certainly going to be a driver to watch in saloons during the next couple of seasons.

After some rather unsuccessful efforts in the 1300cc class, the Renault 5TS prepared by Martin Thomas and driven by Brian Muir was uprated to 1400cc Alpine spec and moved into the 1600 class, but this was still not enough to put it with the class leaders.

Up to 1300cc

Well, wasn't it fun! Bernard Unett, finally adjudged to be the 1977 Tricentrol British Saloon Car Champion by an RAC Tribunal, certainly didn't have it all his own way. Unett, the champion for the third time in four years, ran his familiar Chrysler Avenger, this time in the colours of Mopar—Chrysler's parts and accessories division—taking nine class wins.

Unett, the development engineer for Chrysler's Competitions Department, knows the Avenger inside out and the two cars raced during the season—he changed over to a Series 7 mid-season—were blessed with considerable development and he took nine class wins.

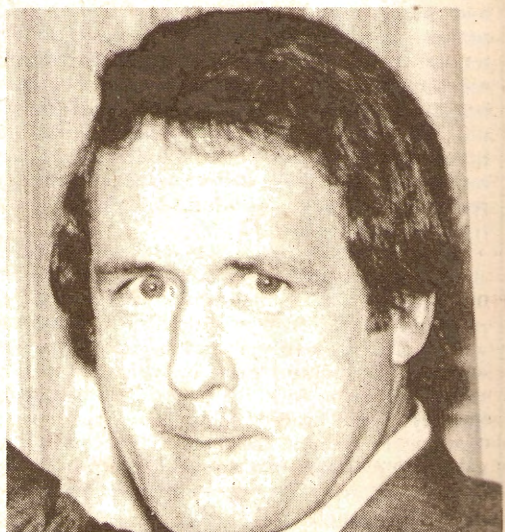
The thorn in Bernard's side was, strange as it may seem, the Leyland Mini, a car which has been a familiar sight in British motor racing for approaching twenty years. After an experiment with a Mini Cooper 'S' in one G1 race last year, engine tuner and driver Richard Longman decided to run at least one 1275GT in 1977. With considerable aid initially from Leyland Cars' homologation expert Ron Elkins—and increasing support from Leyland as success came during the season—Longman put the Mini at the head of the highly competitive 1300cc class. Time and again the green and white Avenger and the blue Mini would come out of a corner with less than a coat of paint separating them, and these two provided some of the most exciting racing of the season away from the top class struggles.

Longman finished second in the class and Alan Curnow, in the second Longman Mini—the team supported by the Patrick Motors Group of Birmingham—finished third.

While some observers felt that the racing was occasionally too close—and at least one Stewards enquiry met to discuss it—the resurgence



Top: Brian Pepper (VW Scirocco) holds off Richard Longman (Leyland Mini) in an inter-class struggle. Above left: beneath the bonnet of Win Percy's Capri was inscribed this witticism. Above right: carried by Tony Dron at Donington as thanks for the club's physiotherapists' help after his practice accident. Below left: they were red and white and there appeared to be hundred—the Alfasud Tis. Below right: Bernie the champ.



of the Mini as a serious competitor was one of the highlights of the 1977 season. Longman won the class on two occasions, the 12th win of the year—but the first in order—having gone to Barrie Williams.

After a pretty successful year in the Samuri Celica in 1976 Barrie had a rather less notable season, driving an Alfa Romeo 1300GT, sponsored by nearly everybody—Gerry Marshall, Barrie himself, Mayfair, Tony Hennin of Autoextra included—won the class at the opening championship round at Silverstone but he had not registered for the series and, therefore, did not gain the points.

Barrie finished fifth in the class behind the first of the myriad AlfaSud Tis, that driven by Motor journalist Rex Greenslade. While the handling of these little 1186cc two door cars is as close to perfect as the team can manage, they still need some extra power to keep them with the Avenger and Mini. A larger engine is promised soon, which could give them the extra boost they need.

our centre spread

British Saloon Car Champion for the third time in three years, Bernard Unett won the 1977 Tricentrol series from the smallest capacity class. Running a 1.3 Chrysler Avenger, sponsored by Mopar—Chrysler's parts and accessories outfit—he won his class nine times against increasingly tough opposition from the rapid Leyland Mini of Richard Longman. Bernard is a development engineer with Chrysler's competitions Department and has been responsible for much of the work carried out on the Avenger. Photo: Jeff Bloxham.









The design of new cars is becoming less and less an exercise in straight engineering, more and more a question of high finance and market research. In the case of the new Sunbeam, there was also a third factor, for the ugly head of politics was raised.

History had a lot to do with it, too. The Rootes Group were very successful in building cars of classic design, but they got out of their depth with the Imp, which was introduced disastrously before it was ready and always cost too much to manufacture. This, and a tragic industrial confrontation, frittered away all the money in the kitty, which had been earmarked for re-tooling and new model development.

Lord Rootes recognised that this was the beginning of the end, and he went to the USA for capital. He came back with a substantial investment from Chrysler, which became a full takeover when the Group continued to be unprofitable. The change to American-style management brought unexpected problems and, before these could be fully ironed out, Chrysler made a heavy loss in the USA, largely as a result of the energy crisis, so capital for Britain dried up.

American businessmen are tough, and they decided to scrap all the British factories, unless the Government would make a massive capital injection. To close the Linwood factory in Scotland would produce such unemployment that the Scottish Nationalists would inevitably take over many seats. The Government are already unpopular in Scotland because of their treatment of Burmah, so to let Linwood go would have been suicide. Predictably, the money was forthcoming, with strings attached.

So, the unprofitable Imp has had the chop, the Avenger assembly lines have gone North, and space for building a new model alongside it has been provided. That new model is the Sunbeam, and it was designed and developed in an incredibly short time. To do this, much of the Avenger know-how has been used, but the Sunbeam is far more than merely a hatchback version of that car. It's sensible to offer both a traditional saloon body and a hatchback with similar machinery, as Vauxhall have found with the Chevette and Volkswagen are now proving with the Polo and Derby. The design team have done better than that, however, for they have produced a little car with a personality of its own, despite a restricted budget.

The pressed-steel body is entirely new, with the exception of the floor-pan. With its short bonnet and large window area, it assures the driver of an excellent all-round view, so necessary in modern traffic. The small overall length secures cheap ferry travel, though some tall drivers might ask for an extra inch or so of leg-room. The rear seats fold, forming a flat platform, which is closer to the roof than those of cars without rear axles; the sill is also on the high side, but the construction is both light and rigid.

The five-bearing pushrod engine, of 1.3- or 1.6-litre size comes from the Avenger but it has a new camshaft, giving less overlap. This has reduced the tappet noise of the old Avenger when idling, but, along with other unseen tweaks, it also provides a fatter power curve and about the same maximum output at slightly reduced revs. By far the most important improvement is the adoption of electronic igni-

Personality piece



The short bonnet and large window area ensure an excellent all-round view.

tion, which has permitted the interval between major services to be extended to 10,000 miles.

While the suspension, with a MacPherson front end and a live rear axle, is basically Avenger, longer travel and increased compliance promise a more relaxed ride. So it proves, and when I took over the 1.6S I was at once struck by its superior refinement, compared with the last Avenger I drove. The engine idles more quietly and is pleasantly flexible, down to quite low speeds, while the rather choppy ride of the sister car is not in evidence. The suspension does not have that combination of softness and stability which only the best all-independent systems give, but the Sunbeam compares well with other live-axle cars.

The Sunbeam is light, smooth, and easy to drive and in this respect challenges the Japanese cars, which earn many sales by making an independent driver feel good. It handles very well indeed and seems to have a little more cornering power than some of its competitors, especially on wet roads. It does not understeer to excess and the steering is a good compromise between the requirements of the beginner and the expert. Incidentally, the car is also available with a 930cc engine of Imp extraction and although that version is outside the scope of this report, I might just mention that the handling is better, and the steering more sensitive, with the heavier power unit.

The fairly high gearing makes medium-fast cruising an effortless proceeding. Boom periods have been kept well above the legal 70mph rate of travel and the engine does not become noisy until well extended. If one uses full revs through the gears, the car is by no means quiet; as the best acceleration figures were obtained by changing up well below the red line on the rev-counter, such driving is fairly pointless in any case.

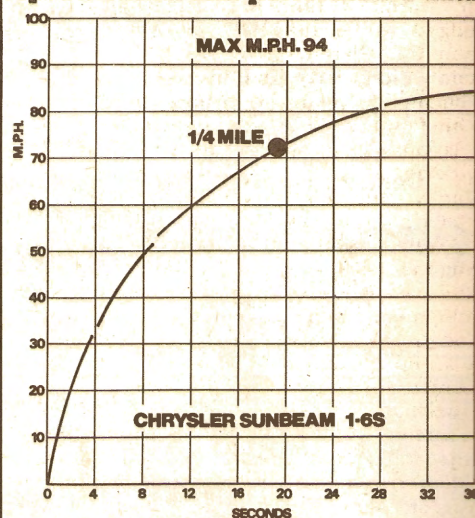
Road noise is well insulated from the body shell and the absence of wind noise is praiseworthy. The excellent gearbox of the test car was only just audible and the rear axle was silent. Very adequate heating and a completely separate ventilation system ensure the comfort of the passengers, as do the well-proportioned seat cushions, but rather better lateral location would not come amiss. The luggage is somewhat visible through the large rear window and the latches at the two bottom corners proved difficult to fasten, due to their curiously primitive construction.

In general, the car is well made and finished, with an attractive interior and conveniently-placed, legible instruments. The under-bonnet scene is tidier than on some other cars from this

source, with praiseworthy accessibility. As is often the case with hatchbacks, the rear window becomes muddy when the roads are wet, but the powerful wiper and washer are extremely effective.

The Chrysler Sunbeam is a pleasant car, in a highly competitive sector of the market. It is unlikely to suffer the teething troubles associated with new models, because its major components are already well tried and if its design is not adventurous, that may be no bad thing. It is known that the Chrysler small car for the USA will be a transverse-engined, front-drive machine of modern conception, but perhaps we should let the Americans get the bugs out of that one for a year or two, while we enjoy the reliability of the wee lassie from Linwood.

Specification and performance data



Car Tested: Chrysler Sunbeam 1.6S 2-door saloon, price £2985.
Engine: Four cylinders 87.35 x 66.7mm (1598cc). Compression ratio 8.8 to 1. 69bhp DIN at 4800rpm. Pushrod-operated overhead valves. Zenith horizontal carburettor. Lucas electronic ignition.
Transmission: Single dry plate clutch, 4-speed synchromesh gearbox with central change, ratios 1.0, 1.387, 2.165, and 3.538 to 1. Live rear axle, ratio 3.545 to 1.
Chassis: Steel monocoque. Independent MacPherson front suspension with anti-roll bar. Rack and pinion steering. Live rear axle on 4 links and coil springs. Servo-assisted dual-circuit disc/drum brakes. Bolt-on steel wheels fitted 155 SR 13 tyres.
Equipment: 12-volt lighting and starting. Speedometer. Rev-counter. Oil-pressure, water-temperature, and fuel gauges. Voltmeter. Heating, demisting, and ventilation system, with heated rear window. 2-speed windscreen wipers and washers, plus rear wash/wipe. Flashing direction indicators with hazard warning. Reversing lights.
Dimensions: Wheelbase 7ft 11in. Track 4ft 3.8in/4ft 3.3in. Overall length 12ft 6.75in. Width 5ft 3.1in. Weight 17cwt 1qr.
Performance: Maximum speed 94mph. Speeds in gears: third 80mph, second 51mph, first 31mph. Standing quarter-mile 19.2s. Acceleration: 0-30mph 3.6s, 0-50mph 8.7s, 0-60mph 12.8s, 0-80mph 27.2s.
Fuel Consumption: 29 to 34mpg.

facing page

Facing page. Above left: The attractive styling of the Sunbeam will help to put Chrysler back in the Fiesta/Polio/Fiat 127 sector of the market. Top right: Driver's eye view of the functional instrument panel through the unusual steering wheel. Centre left: Although the glass hatchback tended to become dirty the rear screen wash/wipe was very effective. Bottom left: The Sunbeam looks pretty from all angles with its strictly practical lines.



Wolfgang Sulc on his way to victory with his six-year-old car.

Wittmann in chains

Sulc wins the rally of tyres—Wittmann beaten for first time in two years by fellow countryman—Report: MARTIN HOLMES.

Wittmann is defeated! For the first time in two years, Franz Wittmann has been beaten by one of his countrymen. Twice he left the road, losing about 3.5mins in the process, and finally he finished third some 170secs behind Wolfgang Sulc (say "Schultz") with a VW1302S. But as much as it seemed that his defeat was the result of errors, in reality his defeat came from having wrong studs in his tyres. On the first part of the rally he was leading, even despite one delay off the road, and much of this had been due to using some very effective chains, made by the German Rud company. For the second part, the organisers banned the use of chains because of the damage they caused to the roads—and Wittmann had no suitable alternative. Second place went to Georg Fischer with a 1600cc Datsun Sunny, a model new to European rallying which made a promising debut. Josef Haider, who had been battling for the lead during the first part of the event went off the road several times and, finally, only three stages from the finish.

ENTRY

Probably the most interesting car was the Datsun Sunny of the Austrian Georg Fischer, a 1.6-litre car of the type which is being developed in Japan. This is the first appearance in Europe of such a car and the first serious rally for Sunny on the Continent, except for the small engined car used in Spain two years ago by the Portuguese Pedro Cortes. The car was built by the Bamming Datsun dealer in Austria, without assistance from the official importers and lacked many of the important parts which are awaited from Japan, like ventilated disc brakes for the front and a competition gearbox. The inlet and exhaust manifolds were obtained from Janspeed in England and the 4.63 differential from California. Fitted with carburettors, the car produces 150 bhp and weighs about 900 kg and employs a standard five-speed gearbox.

Following the recent Opel homologations it was a disappointment not to see any of the new-bodied cars on the starting line, but the three leading cars of Wittmann, Haider and the German Mattig all apparently had non-cross-flow 2-litre engines, in Group 2 form. Wittmann and Mattig used carburettors while Haider had injection: both the Austrians had Carelli engines, the car of Haider being Italian registered and owned by the Italian tuning company. All had five-speed gearboxes: stated horsepower output for Wittmann was 183 and for Haider 191. Wittmann's

car had an ex-Nicolas Eurohandler body. Haider had the same car used by Wolfgang Hauck on the 1977 RAC Rally.

The Fiat dealer, Roth & Wiedner, was responsible for two interesting Fiats: a 128 with a 110 bhp 1509cc carburettor group 2 engine and four speeds and a 124 with 150 bhp 1600cc cross-flow twincam engine with five speeds. Wiedner also competes with a 124 Abarth (but this is less suitable than the 128 for a winter event) and hopes soon to acquire a 131 Abarth.

Wiedner, Fischer and Haider are part of the Austrian Cinzano team which is a sponsorship programme for some Austrian and foreign events this year.

Other cars entered included two Renault 17 Gordinis, for the experienced Richard Bochnicek and the Hungarian Attila Ferjancz: Sulc entered a VW 1302 with a neat paint scheme which disguised and concealed its origins as a 1972 former Salzburg training car. Herbert Grunsteidl drove a Lada from the local importers, using Gislaved tyres, in place of Per Engseth who came third on this rally with the same car last year. The first-named driver was not Grunsteidl, the rallycross champion, but Rudolf Stohl who hoped thereby to gain important championship points.

ROUTE

The event was based at Bad Zell, 45kms to the north-east of Linz, and was divided into two parts. The first comprises a series of loops around four stages near Königswiesen held on Saturday and the second, during the first part of Saturday night, was a series of loops to the north of Bad Zell. To form the necessary distance to qualify for the European championship there was a long road section as the final part of the event after all the stages had been held, and this enabled the organisers to calculate the results of the rally before the first car arrived at the finish.

The first part of the rally used narrow stages which were often very slow while, during the night sections the stages were much faster. The details of the route were issued at scrutineering early Friday morning, and during Friday a classification run was held using part of one of the stages near Königswiesen. This decided the order of starting within the various groups of competitors, and led to the situation where the German Peter Mattig, who is not in the list of nationally seeded drivers, made quickest time of all but did not start first.

The total distance of the stages was 217.4kms but less than 52kms actually had to be paced, the rest of the distance being duplication of stages. The total length of the route was 711kms. The average speed for the first section was 57kph and for the whole rally was 62.8kph. The road sections were held at an easy

service during each loop on the first part of the event but during the night sections, the average required was faster: some 90mins for 73kms, including the stages. Only the first and fifth placed drivers completed the route without road penalties but the penalties in no case changed an overall position.

RALLY

The German Mattig (Group 2 Opel Kadett GT/E) made fastest time on a short first stage just outside Bad Zell, where Siegfried Decker, who had made best Group 1 time during the classification test with a Golf GTI, overtook. On the second stage, however, Wittmann made best time and began to pull ahead.

Sulc was at a great disadvantage during the first lap at Königswiesen: on the second stage he was 16secs slower than Wittmann, on the third 21. He had no chains at all when all the other cars were using them but he was not even sure if they would have helped much: "The other cars were more powerful, and the VW is good on snow. We do not have much power" (his engine had twin carburettors but even so could not have developed more than 105 bhp) "and chains would have taken away most of that. They were more suitable for more powerful cars". On the second lap when the roads began to clear of snow Sulc's disadvantage was reduced and, by the halfway halt, he was up to second place overall.

But, ahead, there had been a fierce battle for the lead after Wittmann had gone off the road. First Mattig took the lead again, then Haider got ahead, then Mattig was back again. But Haider threw away his chances by going off the road and losing nearly 2.5mins and then steam started to pour out of Mattig's exhaust. Two stages before the end of the first part of the rally, Mattig retired with a broken head gasket and this let Sulc up to second place only 8secs behind Wittmann.

The chains had been far more effective than anyone had imagined. After the RAC Rally last year Walter Rohrl had brought his Porsche to Austria for a small event: the Saalbach Ice & Snow Rally. He had been first on every stage and won easily—but his chains had done most of the winning. On this event last year only one or two people tackled the first few stages, where fresh snow was lying, with chains—but this year nearly all the leading drivers were using them.

Herbert Grunsteidl was settling into rallying with a Lada when he had a puncture and left the road near the end of a stage. At 10 kph the car toppled over the edge and rolled into a river nearby; six other cars went off as well. Wilfried Wiedner refused to use chains on the classification test with his front-wheel-drive Fiat 128, but when he saw how well the opposition was going he followed their example; after four stages, however, his differential broke and he was out. The Hungarian Ferjancz (Renault) was going well, lying 11th at halfway, ahead of Richard Bochnicek with a similar car.

So far the rally was open to many drivers: the second part of the rally was half as long again as the first, and throughout the ice and snow was waiting to catch the unwary. Then came the shock announcement that chains would not be permitted any more. "It was my decision", stated Harald Gottlieb, the organiser. "We reserved the right to change the tyre regulations if conditions changed during the event and, looking at the damage that the chains were causing, it was clear we could not allow them any more." It was to be the undoing of Wittmann.

Sulc gained where Wittmann lost: On the first stage of the second part he took 12secs off the leader, enough to put him 4secs in front; on the second stage another six and on the third Wittmann went off the road for nearly 3mins. Sulc was ahead physically and psychologically. After four stages he was 114secs ahead of Fischer, 164 of Haider and 182 of Wittmann. It was time to coast home to the finish.

Harald Staudacher had a maximum penalty on one stage, which entailed exclusion, so the other Fiat (the 124 twincam) was out. Then Haider started to go to pieces. On stage 24 he was off for 4mins, on stage 25 for 0.5mins, on stage 27 for 4mins and then, on stage 37, for good.

It was nice for Sulc. His little car had been a long way in its time, some 156,000kms to be precise, but never had it achieved something as important as this victory. And the win was only part of the story: it represented victory over the Wittmann machine. Last year Wittmann won through a carefully executed ploy which left his rivals confused and amazed. This year it was Wittmann's turn to be confused and amazed!

9th Janner Rally

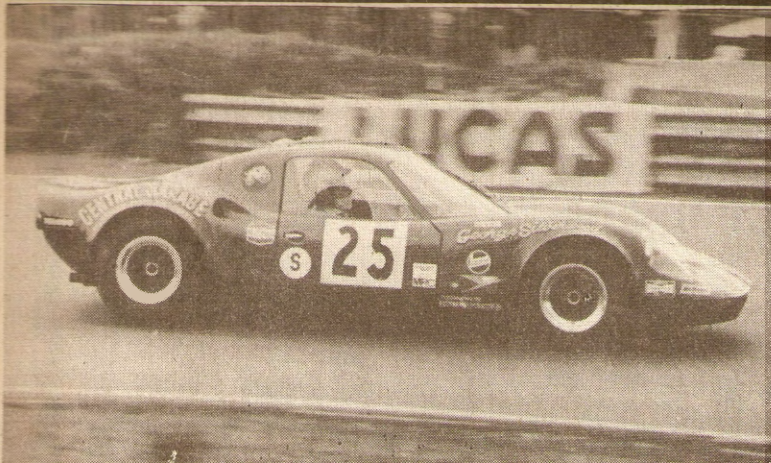
ECR coeff 1 round 1 13-15 January 1978

1. Wolfgang Sulc/Fritz Weikelbraun (VW1302S), 12461;
2. Georg Fischer/Michael Weinzierl (Datsun Sunny), 12589;
3. Franz Wittmann/Kurt Nestinger (Opel Kadett GT/E), 12631;
4. Andreas Stigler/Josef Stigler (VW Golf GTI), 13000;
5. Alois Albrecht/Walter Rochet (Ford Escort RS2000), 13261;
6. Jürgen Berti/Klaus Hesse (VW Golf GTI), 23380;
7. Attila Ferjancz/Janos Tandari (Renault 17 Gordini), 13549; 8. Wolfgang Schneider/Werner Leismüller (Ford Escort RS2000), 13682;
9. Will Geringer/Herbert Winter (Ford Escort RS2000), 13671; 10. Walter Osterer/Alfred Fraiss (Opel Kadett GT/E), 13705.

ECR

EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP
JANNER RALLY

1



The superb Chevron B8s are a feature of the Group IV series. This is George Silverwood in the car's heyday.

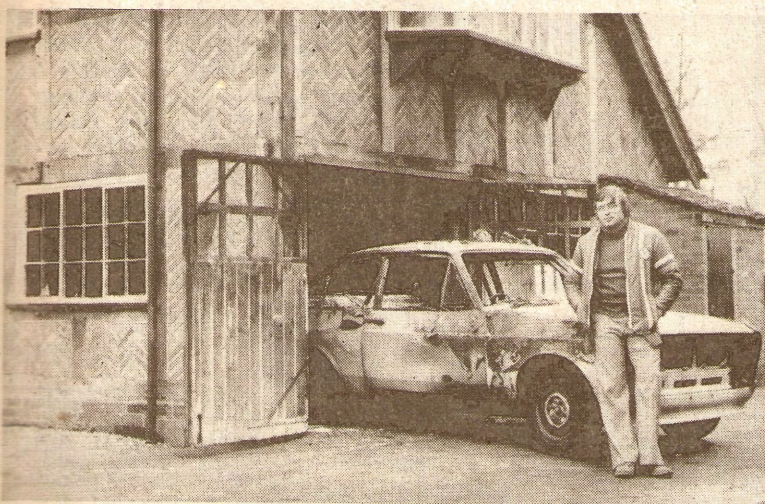
Wild Rose and Terry's Group IV

The 1978 HSCC Group IV Championship is to be run over eight rounds at several circuits and has attracted sponsorship from the business ventures of two drivers who wish to put back something into the sport. It will be known as the Wild Rose Caravan Park racing with Terry and Company (Jewellers) Championship, Formula Junior driver Mike Harrison being the owner of the former (and hoping to bring out his newly restored Elva Mk7S V8 at some rounds) and international sports car man John Lepp running the latter. He will provide trophies for the series.

The championship caters for some of the most beautiful sports machinery ever built and, like last year, should result in some really nostalgic racing

between the rapid Ford GT40s, the lumbering Lola T70s and McLarens and the nimbler machinery such as the classic Chevron B8s, Lotus 47s and the like. These fabulous cars have great spectator appeal and, to the true enthusiast, bring back fond memories of the halcyon days of sports car racing dating back to the late 'sixties and the superb atmosphere of the once great Oulton Park circuit.

All cars must comply to HSCC Group IV and be registered with the Club. Further details are available from Paul Howarth, 9 St Marys Drive, Greenfield, Oldham, Lancs (please enclose an SAE) or phone Saddleworth 2758 (Home) or 061-834 5605 (Business).



John Morris's Group 1 plans evaporated in a workshop fire last week.

Vulcanised Escort for Morris

Coventry driver John Morris, who for three seasons has campaigned a Ford Escort in the BRSCC Challenge in the black livery of Morris Vulcan Ltd/Flyer Roller Skates, hopes to do a few rounds of the national G1 championship with a Mexico. Sadly, though, his plans suffered a severe setback last week when the car was destroyed in a fire which gutted the workshop at his home in Berkswell. His sponsors had made available sufficient funds for John to

run the Sport again this year, in addition to building the G1 car. Despite this blow, Morris will be out in the first round of the Debenhams Escort Challenge at Brands Hatch on March 5 and still intends to have some drives in the Mexico later in the season. Morris Vulcan Ltd manufacture skateboards which are enjoying a major 'craze' at present, finding their way into thousands of children's stockings at Christmas.

Leyland ST bonus scheme

Leyland ST have just announced details of the Leyland Motorsport Bonus Scheme 1978 in which private entrants competing in a wide range of sporting events can qualify for a cash award or Leyland ST parts vouchers dependent on overall and class finishing positions. Non-Leyland cars using Leyland engines do not qualify for the scheme other than in Drag Racing or Formula 3. The word 'Leyland' must appear in the name of the car if a competitor is to receive an award and Leyland insignia is available on request to bonus scheme participants. Notification of success in a specified event must be made by telephone or telex by the entrant within 48 hours of the results being published. Within seven days of the event an application form must be received with a copy of the official results. Notification and application should be sent to Ron Elkins, Leyland ST, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 1AU. Tel: 0235 25251, telex: 83128. Bonus payments will be

made in cash or double the cash value in the form of a Leyland ST parts voucher which may be exchanged at Abingdon for parts at the current retail price.

On an international basis, for example, if you were to win a World Championship Rally in your 1965 Cooper S you could end up £1000 richer or, on the circuits, when you win the Nürburgring ETC race in your father's road-going Jaguar XJ5.3C you could win £500. National events are also worth winning with £150 to the winner of each class in several national sports and saloon championships and to the class winners of the RAC Open and Castrol/AUTOSPORT championships—the overall winner of the rally series stands to win £1000. Rallycross, drag racing, hillclimbing, autocross, PCTs, autotests and sprints are also included in the scheme, full details of which can be had from the above address.

No LSDs for saloons in 1978

Limited slip differentials will *not* be allowed in production saloon racing—or in the Renault 5TS or Escort championships—in 1978. After two conflicting stories in *Sports Extra* (December 22/29, January 12), we checked with the RAC at Belgrave Square.

After the prodsaloon Open Day, at which competitors voted by 25 to 1 that they would like to see limited slip diffs allowed, the Race Committee considered the findings of all Open Days. The committee then announced that prodsaloons would be able to use an lsd in 1978, whether or not it was standard equipment. This was, then published in the RAC Motor Sport Club News.

A small internal holocaust ensued within the walls of 31 Belgrave Square as there is a clear FIA ruling that technical regulations cannot be changed without one year's clear notice—and that means until 1979. So, no lsds in prodsaloons.

Just to confirm it, copies of the RAC Motor Sport Technical Manual (price £2 from Belgrave Square) are now available and, on page 20, under the heading Production Saloon Cars, rule 9(b) states: "Torque biasing differentials are permitted only if fitted as standard equipment and shown on the RAC Production Car Specification Sheet". And that, gentlemen, appears to be that.

Reynards selling like hot cakes

Following their very promising reception at the Donington Park Speed Show last week, it seems that there will be quite a few Reynard chassis out in FF2000 this season. The striking new SF78 models have been selling like the proverbial hot cakes—pre-Christmas sales standing at 15. Virtually all the cars have been sold in kit form and Adrian Reynard offers a saving of more than £1,000 for cars purchased in this manner. Ironically the kit-car was conceived not only to lessen the cost of a competitive car but also because Reynard had no assembly premises in which to construct them.

With the increased professionalism now apparent in the formula, many teams now have a full-time mechanic who can profitably be employed over the close season by building up the new season's chassis. Most kits can be as-

sembled in 100 hours using only hand tools. Several teams, in fact, have ordered two chassis in knocked-down form due to the price advantage. Rick Gorne, Jeremy Rossiter, Steve Farthing and Reynard himself will each have a choice of two cars while Richard Dutton Racing have four more and others have been bought by Tom Shepherd, Nick Dainty, Niki Leon and Reynard's Davron agency, who have sold five cars to Europe. Two kits less engine and gearbox are sold for £5,900.

Reynard Racing Cars expect to sell 50 such cars during 1978, an increase of 19 over last year. The Reynard SF78 features many improvements over the SF77 including aerodynamic bodywork, bigger brakes, sideplate wing mount, revised suspension geometry, dash roll over hoop and off-the-shelf delivery.



Left: Leslie gets FF2000 break. Right: Roe will drive a works RF78.

Leslie and Roe to Van Diemen

It seems as though Van Diemen's 1978 racing plans are shaping up nicely over in Norfolk and that the coming season will prove as successful as 1977 did. Not wishing to change a successful formula Ralph Firman has made only slight modifications to the RF77 FF1600 chassis, now called the RF78 of course, and three of these cars will be run by the works for Irishman Michael Roe, Brazilian FF champion Carlos Abdala and a Colombian driver who will bring some finance with him from South America. The works-assisted FF2000 machine

will be handled by David Leslie (at last someone is giving him a chance to display his ability) who has been loaned a chassis to contest the two British championships and some European races. David's problem, though, is still one of finance as he has to find the running costs himself.

Van Diemen have reportedly sold 46 chassis of which examples of the FF78 will be run by David McClelland, Tom Wood and Trevor Templeton while Jim Russell has bought some chassis for his fleet as have Scorpion.

ADO on Beacon

Motor sport enthusiasts in Wolverhampton and the West Midlands area will be interested to know that Radio Beacon (303 metres Medium wave and 97.2 metres VHF) are keen on the sport too. Last Saturday Russell Brookes made his second "appearance" on Pat Foley's sports chat show and this Saturday (January 21) three leading hill-climbers from the Hagley & DLCC will be interviewed. Listeners should phone Wolverhampton 754123 between 6pm and 7pm if they would like to question reigning RAC hillclimb champion Alister Douglas-Osborn who has done wonders over the past year with the Waring & Gillow Pilbeam-DFV, Barry "King of the 500cc Brigade" Brant who pilots the indecently quick ABGO Cooper-Triumph and Russ Ward whose exploits over the years in Midgets, an Arkley, a Porsche and the odd single-seater, have always been very rapid. It's good to see a local radio station taking such a keen interest in the sport at this level so give Radio Beacon your support and perhaps other stations will be encouraged to follow suit.

● Le Mans driver and former rally man David Preece will again be driving the Oldham & Crowther Jaguar XK120 'WPU 207' in thoroughbred sports car races in 1978. This particular car has won the over 2700cc class of the BARC championship for the past two years so Dave will be trying to make it third time lucky this year.

Historic racing programme

Following discussions with the major promoting clubs, Group 1 Historic races are likely to be featured in the following international programmes during the 1978 British racing season: Thruxton, March 27; Brands Hatch, May 1; Silverstone, July 1; Donington, August 6; Silverstone, September 30 and Brands Hatch, October 7. Entries will be by invitation only for Historic Group 1 Sports Racing and Grand Prix-type cars which conform to Appendix K under FIA Rules. Classes will be arranged by year of manufacture as follows: G1 Historic Single Seat GP Cars up to 1953; and from 1954-60; G1 Historic Prototype or Sports Racing Cars from 1950-54; 1955-57; and from 1958-60. Those interested should write, giving full details of their car(s) to Bert Young, 36 Chiltern Court, Baker Street, London NW1 5ST.

● The BRSCC (Midland Centre) are holding their annual film show at The Post House, Great Barr, Birmingham on Thursday, January 26. Admission is free to what appears to be one of the best shows for a long time, the evening getting under way at 8pm. Films programmed for the event include the 1977 Long Beach GP, Niki Lauda, Four for Foyt—Indianapolis 1977 and Le Mans 1977. A bar extension has been arranged until midnight so don't miss a splendid opportunity to brush up on your major international racing knowledge.

Optim for Brensec

Swindon-based racehire company Brensec International Racing are planning to run at least two 1978-model chassis in FF1600 this season. They have also secured partial sponsorship from a couple of companies for the first four drivers who contract to do ten races each with Brensec. One of the companies, Optim, manufacture digital car clocks, watches and TV games while the other, Brensec Marketing, sells land, villas and apartments in Spain. Brensec International Racing also have the services of a celebrity who is interested in racing and has taken a full racing driver's course, should any serious sponsors be interested. Details of the 1978 programme are obtainable from Steve Coen, himself a former Atlantic driver, on 0793 782053. John Nichols represents Brensec in Spain for Spanish or South American drivers interested in the concern's activities and can be contacted at Jardines San Fernando 1c, Avenida Imperial, Torremolinos.

Jeanes stops all that Streaking

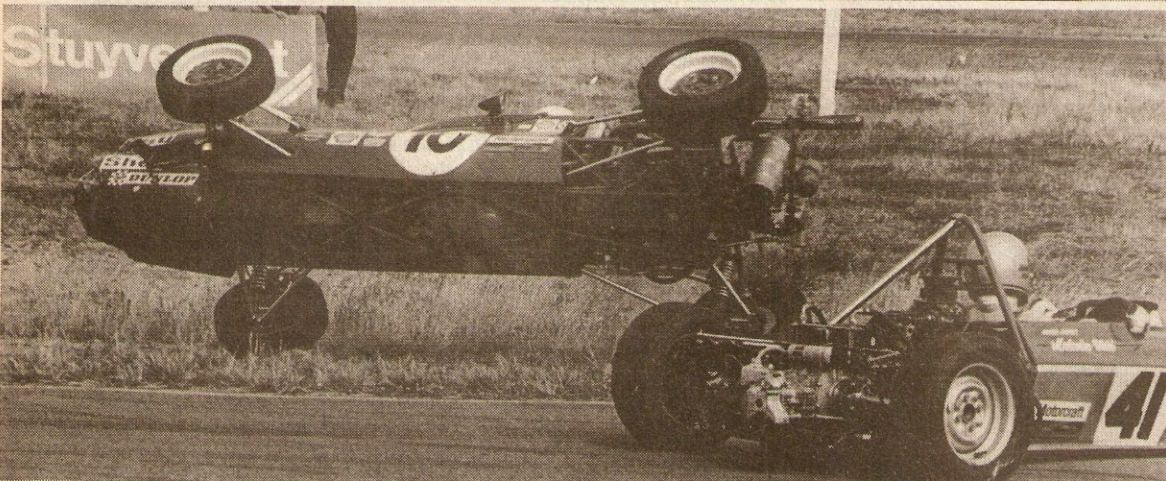
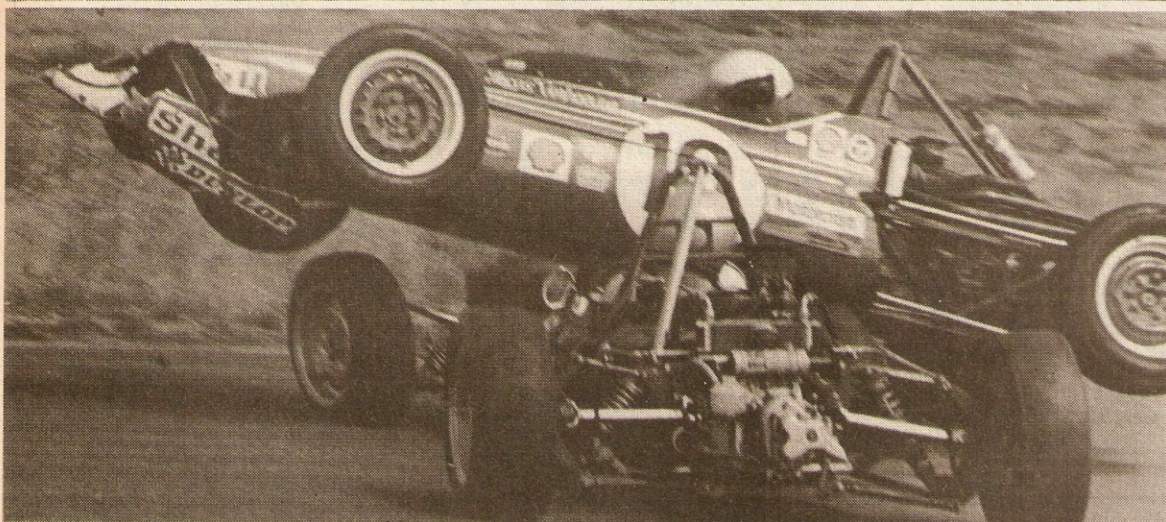
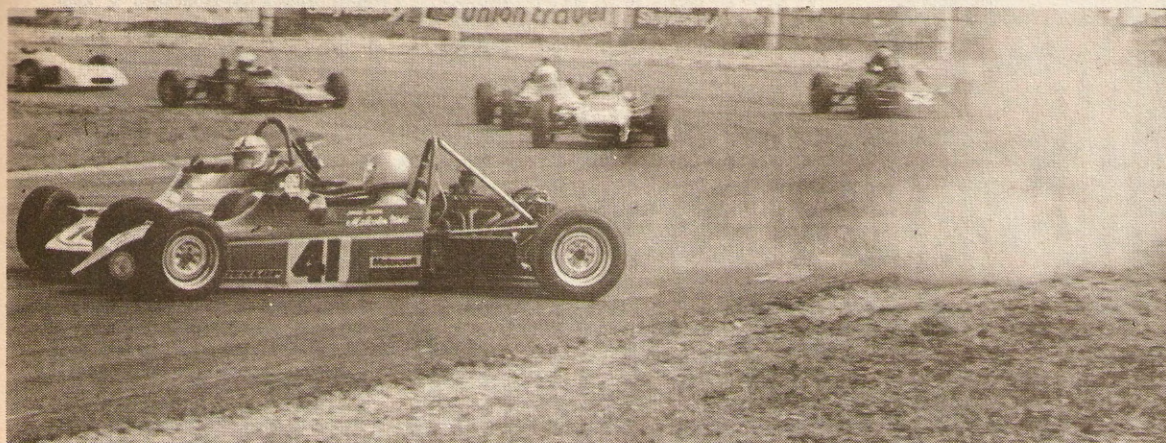
That mysterious character "The Streaker" from Stockbridge, 1977 Varley Batteries Monoposto Champion, is stepping up into FF1600 after two seasons with the Monoposto Club driving what must have been the most beautifully prepared car to have ever graced the formula, the immaculate ex-Graham Hill Lotus 35. Having been runner-up in the series with the Lotus in 1976 the Stockbridge Racing Team have been a familiar sight around the paddocks with their equally attractive transporter, John Fenning's lengthened Transit pick-up. Now completely clothed again after three years out in the cold, Carl Jeanes has acquired the complete Newbridge Racing Dulon MP19 equipture from Tony Broster. Carl will run in at least two of the major championships with guidance from ex-racer Fenning and engines prepared by Salisbury engineer Paul Bright.

P. J. Evans TR7



P. J. Evans Ltd, the Midlands' largest Leyland distributors, are to run a works prepared Leyland TR7 in two national prodsports championships this season. The car, to be built at Abingdon, will be driven by Juliette Slaughter, Britain's top woman club racing driver of 1977, who will campaign it at 20 meetings throughout the country. Juliette, a resident of Chiswick and daughter of a racing vicar—her father competed at Brooklands in the 1930s—won the BWRDC Embassy Trophy for the best performance in all races during the year. She also finished runner-up to Divina Galica in the Club's other two major championships, the ShellSport and Goodwin trophies. Juliette has a wide experience in motor racing having raced in Formula Ford and saloon events since 1970 and winning the BWRDC Novice award in 1971. Last year she competed on a regular basis for the first time, concentrating on the Renault Elf Challenge for Renault STS with occasional outings in ShellSport Escorts and Divina's Sports 2000 Lola. P. J. Evans's introduction to Juliette was in March 1977 when she was judge for their successful "Woman driver of the Year" competition. As Juliette has a very full programme in 1978, Alison Davis from Basingstoke will drive the car when Juliette is elsewhere. Alison began her racing career in 1969 with a Diva sports car (which she still owns) before a Ginetta G15 was acquired for circuit and hillclimb use in the livery of Femfresh. For the past three years she has concentrated on her career as Graphics Co-ordinator with a leading firm of civil engineers in Basingstoke. Alison has kept her hand in through the popular ShellSport Ladies races in which she has proved very successful.

Bay Park Boondocks



Formula Ford 1600 supports all the major Pacific races in New Zealand these days. This sequence (Bay Park January 2) shows Malcolm Webb's Lotus 69 (41) and Lucas Verhoeven's machine (10) engaging in combat. Neither driver was injured and little damage ensued so both continued racing!

Marchant's Lydden

Marchant & Cox, the Hastings-based glassfibre mouldings firm under the enthusiastic directorship of long-time FF1600 competitor Len Marchant, are to back the Lydden-based FF1600 championship again in 1978. There will be 16 rounds in total, a driver's best 12 results counting towards his final standing and the Marchant & Cox Trophy. Rounds will be held on April 2, 9, 16, May 1, 21, 29; June 4 and 18; July 9, 16, 30; August 6 and 13; September 3 and 24 and October 8. Points will be scored on a 9-6-4-3-2-1 basis, the championship winner taking home £100 and the Marchant & Cox Trophy with £75, £50 and £25 to the next three finishers. Further details for competitors may be obtained from Miss B. Harris on 0795 72926.

Promising Brands

The opening round of the 1978 Castrol/BTRDA Rallycross Championship takes place on Sunday, January 29 at Brands Hatch and already the event looks very promising. A full entry of 80 cars, plus 12 reserves, has been received and this includes all the country's top rallycross exponents. Heading the entry is the ex-Bose Porsche of Rod Chapman which won the non-championship rallycross at Brands earlier this month, the brilliant Barry Lee whose car control is worth the admission fee alone, Trevor Reeves's Castrol/Dove Group Mini, Peter Harrold and John Button in Vee Dubs, Will Gollop's rapid Saab and the Bose Hi-Fi Minis of Bruce Bamber and Dick Griffiths while variety is provided by Roger Burn's Clan and the unlikely-sounding Austin Allegro of John Mackley.

● The Southern Region of the BMRMC are holding an Historic Racing Car Evening at 'The Sun', Whitton Road, Hounslow, Middlesex. Chairman for the evening will be Michael Bowler (editor of *Thoroughbred and Classic Car*) and the panel shall consist of Chris Drake, Bert Young and Simon Phillips, all of whom are handy behind the wheel themselves. The event starts at 7.30pm, everyone is welcome and a raffle will be held.

Briefly...

● Selby & District MC are running their Three Swans Rally on January 28/29. The 120-mile all tarmac route event caters for up to 60 cars and is the first round of the Humberside Motor Sport Group's rally championship. The start is at The Hazel Bush, Malton Road, York after scrutineering at Leedhams Garage. Maps used will be 100/101/105 and 106 and entries are still available at £7.50 until January 24. Regs can be obtained from Fred Harris, 31 Nether Way, Nether Poppleton, York. Tel: York 795014. Marshals are also required and offers would be welcomed by Roy Sumpner, 77 Station Road, Upper Poppleton York. Tel: York 795016.

● Guest speaker at next Monday's meeting of the London Special Builders' Group of the 750MC will be top FF1600 and FF2000 designer Adrian Reynard. The venue, as always, is the Craven Arms, Lavender Hill, Battersea where the evening gets under way at 8pm. Everyone is welcome to what promises to be an excellent and informative meeting.

● The Southern region of the BMRMC have organised another of their popular forums, this time on the subject of sports cars, in the clubhouse bar at Brands Hatch on Wednesday January 25. Panellists include Derek Ongaro (RAC Motorsport Division), Brian Joscelyne and Ian 'Baked Bean' Bracey. An excellent evening is assured so be there from 7.30pm for the kick-off.

● Thirty five stage miles for £25 are the ingredients of the Newtown & District AC's Nant yr Hwch Stages Rally on February 5 which starts at 11am and will hopefully be all over by around 3pm. The start will be in the middle of a complex and a video tape of the whole event will be shown later at the finish at the Abernant Lake Hotel. Tony Farrington, Ashleigh, Dolforgan View, Kerry, Newtown, has the regs.

● Regs become available this week for the Owen Motoring Club's AGBO Rally, first round of the *Motoring News* Rally Championship which takes place on Feb 25/26. This year the event will start in Dolgelly and finish at Llandrindod Wells. Mrs Ann Evans of 4 Briar Close, Rugeley, has the regs for the 200 mile event which will include five selectives.

● The AGM of the Special Saloon Register was held at the Post House, Crick, Rugby on Sunday, December 18. As well as a general discussion on matters affecting the formula, the principle object of the meeting was the election of officers. The Committee for 1978 will be: Jeff Ward (Chairman), Nick Whiting (over 2500cc class), Graham Goode (2500cc), Eric Smith (1300cc), Malcolm Johnstone (1000cc) and David Enderby (850cc). The Club's next event will be the Dinner Dance, at the same venue, on February 11. Speakers will be Dave Lee Travis and our own Robin Bradford. A disco will be in operation until 2am—tickets for the evening, at £6.50 each, are obtainable from Kaye Goode on Leicester 831126.

Magnum's Mini Miglia

Inheriting the lead after previous leader Bob Bean had collected a fail for sailing through a control without stopping Ian Gurnett and Frank Stuart-Brown from Dewsbury won the Mini Miglia Rally run by Knowledale CC in Cumbria last Saturday night.

Eighty-nine crews set out from the Tebay start near Shap and, although the organisers lost about 20 miles of the route around Askrigg and Dent in North Yorkshire because snow had closed some roads, the rest of the route went according to plan though minus two of the four selectives.

Bean and Alan Greenwood (RS2000) and Gurnett/Stuart-Brown (Magnum) were level at first petrol on 13mins while last year's winners Ian Harrison and Peter Ainsworth (Ascona) were third, a minute down and were followed by a fair number of crews all on 15mins. By the next petrol, after 35 controls, Bean had pulled out a lead of three-quarters of a minute from Gurnett with Harrison still third but about 1.5mins down.

It was in the final third of the night that Bean and Greenwood made their error and this left Gurnett to come home an easy winner by almost 4mins from Harrison/Ainsworth. A fine battle for third place was finally resolved late in the night in favour of John Potter/Jeremy Mathew (Dolomite Sprint) who had the same time as Bernard Griffin/Andrew Milner (Cooper S).

1, Ian Gurnett/Frank Stuart-Brown (Magnum), 39m 50s; 2, Ian Harrison/Peter Ainsworth (Ascona), 43m 38s; 3, John Potter/Jeremy Mathew (Dolomite Sprint), 46m 8s; 4, Bernard Griffin/Andrew Milner (Cooper S), 46m 8s; 5, Pete Swire/Mike Schofield (Kadett), 47m 8s; 6, John Haygarth/John Coppin (Avenger), 48m 55s. **Class winners:** John Bowers/Martin Coleman (Avenger), 58m 39s; Bob Lightfoot/Philip Wilde (Mexico), 72m 18s; Martin Dawson/Keith Wood (RS2000), 55m 10s; Philip Casson/Dave Orrick (Cooper S), 54m 32s.

Ross Traders entry

Last year's winners, Andy Chambers and Miles Bailey, have chosen to start at number 4 on Saturday night on the Ross Traders Rally, second round of the Welsh Road Rally Championship, which has attracted a good entry. Start and finish are at the Garden Restaurant, Whitchurch, about two miles from the motorway.

Leading the field away will be Geoff Davis/Phil Robinson (RS2000), followed by Theo Bengry/Paul Watkins (Opel Kadett) while at 3 will be Geoff Kitney/Alan McCann (RS2000). Fifth away will be Howard Davies/Phil Jones followed by Dave Pugh/Bill Pardoe, both crews in RS2000s.

The 200-mile route includes a couple of selectives and the Clerk of the Course warns that there are a lot of hairpins. A few marshals are required and if you can help, please ring Colin Webb at Lydbrook 60583.



Stuart and Margaret Butterfield were the third Butterfield crew home, in tenth place.

White Rose Trophy goes to Hurt

With no Championship Trial on Sunday most of the Northern and some of the Midland Triallers competed for the YSCC White Rose Trophy at Howden Clough near Batley. Organiser Chris Hobson had laid out seven muddy and tight sections which were tackled four times. The result was a massive return to form and an easy win for Lol Hurt who was never headed all day.

The first round was the most difficult but after this Lol Hurt had only scored 11 points to head Julian Fack by 3pts with Peter Dibble on 20, Ralph Needham on 23, Keith Butterfield on 24 and John Ward 26. By lunchtime Hurt had moved further ahead with a total of 20 but the star of this round was Ralph Needham who scored a super 3 to move into a well deserved second spot. Fack was third and Keith Butterfield fourth at this point. Further down the field Tony Butterfield and Neil Bedford were both going well while Roy Lane was very pleased with his new Formula Ford engine.

In the afternoon session, Hurt put

the issue beyond doubt when he went clear in the third round and scored only 6 on the final circuit. Behind the battle was closer as Fack slowly closed the ground on veteran Needham. The crunch came on hill 6 when Fack lifted off on some clay a fraction early to stop at the 2 on a hill Needham cleaned. It was sufficient to give Needham the place in a tie-break. Behind the battling duo was John Ward who had a splendid afternoon dropping only 6pts to move well clear of Keith Butterfield and Neil Bedford. Robin Jager and Eric Eadon both had disappointing days being split by Tony Butterfield while third brother Stuart Butterfield continued to improve in tenth spot.

1, Lol Hurt/Lew Lait (Imp Special), 26pts; 2, Ralph Needham/Graham Hoyle (Cannon), 38; 3, Julian Fack/Meg Marmon (Impunity), 38; 4, John Ward/Liam Boyle (Facksimile), 45; 5, Keith Butterfield/Joyce Butterfield (Cannon), 57; 6, Neil Bedford/Irene Bedford (Facksimile), 73; 7, Robin Jager/Alistair Hunter (Facksimile), 86; 8, Tony Butterfield/Effie Butterfield (Aberties), 103; 9, Eric Eadon/Barry Webster (Eadon), 127; 10, Stuart Butterfield/Margaret Butterfield (Cannon), 146.

Best year ever for Dudsbury CC

Dudsbury Car Club's 1977 Championships were the most successful in the club's history with a considerable increase in the number of members taking part. No fewer than 20 events were won outright by club members, ranging from Trials and Autotests up to Fred Gallagher's success on the international *Boucles de Spa Rally*.

Richard Acres (Esso Uniflo Mini) scored his third successive premier award in winning the club's championship as well as the ACSMC title in the field of trials and autotests. 1976 runner-up Keith Wanklyn took his Farnside Road Service Station/Hatcher & Clement Mexico to victory in the rally championship from Bill Riddle who lost

out having changed from rallies to speed events. Riddle showed his versatility by winning two rallies, one rallycross and gaining two autocross BTDs in 1977. Top navigator was Roger Hunt again who just pipped Wanklyn's partner John Waters leaving international man Gallagher back in third.

The Dudsbury speed series was a great success and was taken by autocrosser Trevor Smith in his Esso Uniflo Mini who narrowly defeated Graham Dubber's Celcon Group Escort. Pauline Hale sped to the ladies championship having borrowed an Escort from a friend while the marshals' championship fell convincingly to Geoff and Alison Roberts.

Druidale leaders

Bill Evans, the Onchan mechanic, and his navigator Dave Jones, have taken a commanding lead in the Druidale MC rally championship. On Saturday they gained their second win in succession on the club's January Rally, run over 85 miles of Manx roads.

Driving their RS1600 they finished the event with a comfortable margin in hand over second-placed Ken Leece/Mike Castle (RS2000), with nephew Glen third in a Mexico accompanied by Bill Peters.

1, Bill Evans/Dave Jones (RS1600), 63 penalties; 2, Ken Leece/Mike Castle (RS2000), 81pens; 3, Glen Leece/Bill Peters (Mexico), 91pens; 4, Hayden Minay/Martin Wasley (Cooper S), 116pens; 5, Mark Ellison, Norman Quail (Mexico), 289pens; 6, Terry Phillips/John Hunter (Saab 96) 357pens.

BTD to Barnes

Harry Barnes from Solihull took BTD by more than a second with a second-run time of 74.5s at the Shenstone & District CC annual winter autocross at Hill Ridware, near Lichfield, last Sunday. Thirty-one competitors turned out for four timed runs and, although Barnes (1.5 Mini), was easily the quickest driver, there was a good scrap for the places behind him in the class.

Eventual winner of the class was Derek Sparkes (Cooper) who beat Trevor Lawson by 0.2sec. In a class for cars running on standard tyres Ken Southall (Escort TC) defeated Alistair de-Hamel (Mexico), by 0.2sec.

BTD: Harry Barnes (Mini), 74.5s. **Class winners:** Peter Rowney (VW), 78.8s; Ken Southall (Escort TC), 85.5s; John Ankrett (Midget), 86.5s; Derek Sparkes (Cooper), 75.8.

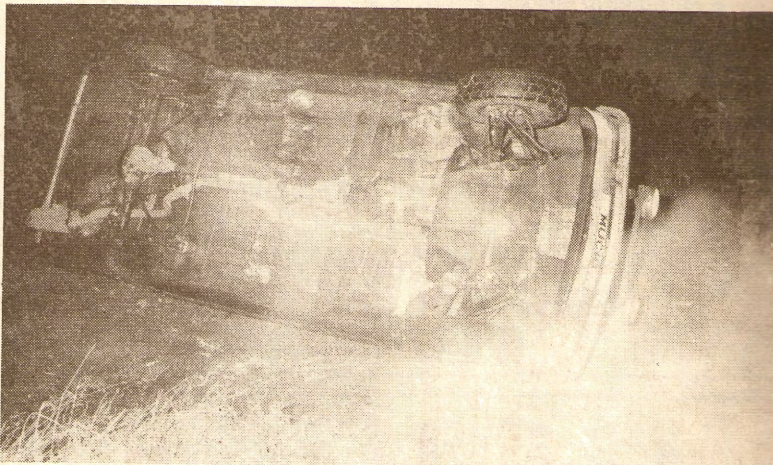
Jones's Snowball

Bargoed crew Laurence Jones and Peter Watts started the Welsh Road Rally Championship in fine style last Saturday night when they scored a very comfortable win on the first round, the Snowball Rally, run by Vale of Cothi MC.

A disappointingly low entry of only 40 crews turned up at Check Point Service Station, Llanwrda, for the 160-mile route which had two selectives and 45 controls in central South Wales. Conditions were slippery in places and there was a sprinkling of snow on Farmers Mountain. Fortunately there were few major problems as a result of the conditions although Geoff Kitney/Alan McCann slid off a muddy white in their Escort and became well and truly stuck in the ditch in the second half. Another crew to retire in the second half when well in contention were Eric Davies and Alan Jones (RS1800) while Elgan Jones and Royston Lewis were uninjured after rolling their Mexico in a big way.

1, Laurence Jones/Peter Watts (RS2000), 44m15s; 2, Gwynndaf Evans/Martin Thomas (RS2000), 51m 14s; 3, Neil Jones/Tony Davies (RS1800), 55m 8s; 4, M. Tovey/D. Herbert (Escort), 57m 18s; 5, Dillam Williams/Gwyn Davies (BMW 2002), 64m 21s; 6, Paul Peacock/Lee Vincent (Escort), 66m 25s. Novices: J. Challis/K. Fitzgerald (Capri), 94m 8s.

Kareless Karebrand!



This spectacular sequence by photographer John Overton shows the Dolomite Sprint of Charles Golding and Preston Ayres on the West Essex Car Club's Karebrand rally a fortnight ago. After spectators had righted the car the unperturbed crew rejoined the fray and finished fourth!

Briefly . . .

● As expected the 'Esso Uniflo CAD-MOC Rally' on February 4/5 has attracted a capacity entry of 60 cars plus ten reserves. Of these, 33 come from the promoting club, the Croydon & District MC. At number 1 are 1977 winners Bryan Nash/Dave Johnson followed by Derek Webb and the exuberant Rick Smith who share the Ardee Hose Distributors Escort. Marshals are still required, anyone keen to offer their services should contact Ian Monro on 01-689 9251.

● Ian Ashley is the guest of honour at the Lincoln Motor Cycle & Car Club annual dinner and presentation of awards to be held this year at the Moor Lodge Hotel, Branston, near Lincoln. The festivities start at 7.30pm tomorrow.

● From Weymouth to Sidmouth via 165 miles of yellows and whites is the menu offered by Woolbridge MC for their Dragon Rally on February 4/5 which is being sponsored by the company which owns the *Southern Echo* newspaper. Angela Bennett of 1 Duck Street, Cerne Abbas, Dorchester, has the regs.

● Due to the difficulties of arranging sponsorship in time for the usual event in March 1978, the Hants & Berks MC has decided to run an unsponsored mini-economy run in September. It will be over a 400-mile route in the Club's local area and will be open to saloon cars (with a diesel class) although no observers will be carried and driving methods will be free. Regs will be sent out to all previous competitors by May 1 and will be generally available from the Secretary of the Meeting, Mr P. D. T. Stevens, The Coach House, Sandhurst Lodge, Crowthorne, Berks. Tel: Crowthorne 2596. Negotiations are in hand to run a major sponsored run again in March 1979.

● Total and East-Dean Motoring Centre, Eastbourne, are sponsors of the Eastbourne & Ram MC's Downs Rally next week end and an all tarmac route of 120 miles on Map 199 has been organised. A few entries are still available by telephoning Tony Griffiths at Eastbourne 54458.

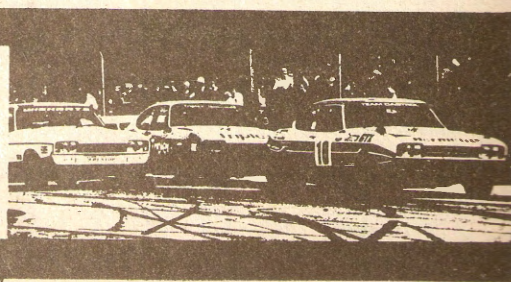
● The Association of Northern Car Clubs PCT Championship for 1977 has been won by Brighouse driver Harry Tregenza in his Escort Mexico. Tregenza was runner-up in 1976 and, at 66, has done particularly well to take the title from Ken Waddington (Imp) and Richard Clark (HRG).

International events

Date
Jan 21/28
Jan 22
Jan 22

Venue
Monte Carlo, Monaco
Riverside, USA
Teretonga, New Zealand

Event
Monte Carlo Rally—World Rally Championship for Makes round 1
Riverside 500—NASCAR
Peter Stuyvesant Formula Atlantic Series—G2, FF



British events

Date
Jan 21/22
Jan 21/22
Jan 21/22
Jan 21/22
Jan 21/22
Jan 28

Venue
Brooklyn Garage, Redditch
Mercury Staging Post Motel, Kennford (MR192/914856)
Battle, Sussex
Daniel Ross (Engineers), Ladyacre Road, Lanark (MR72/886435)
Garden Restaurant, Whitchurch, nr Ross
Cowley Hill Farm, Anstell Rdware, Staffs

Event
Rally
Rally
Rally
Rally
Rally
Rally
PCT

Status
R
R
R
R
R
R
R

Club
Redditch & DCC
Haldon MC
S.W.L. MC
Dunfermline CC
Ross & DMC
Owen MC

Start
—
23.01
21.01
23.01
—
10.00

Details
Brooklyn Valkyrie Rally
Monte Rally
Marsh Mist Rally
Night Op. Rally
Ross Traders Rally
Snowy Mountain Trail



**If you want to succeed in
motor racing take up Golf.**



IN ITS FIRST FULL SEASON, THE VOLKSWAGEN GOLF GTI WON
CLASS 2 IN THE TRICENTRAL BRITISH OPEN CAR CHAMPIONSHIP.